

NEWS

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Plaque at Queen Street Cemetery, Walsall, to James Thompson VC



Barry Booth at the grave of his great-grandfather Anthony Booth VC, at St Michael's Church, Brierley Hill. The headstone is now weatherworn



Anthony Booth VC who bravely led his men to safety in the Zulu War



Captain Bonner was awarded the Victoria Cross for his role in WWI

Preserving graves of bravest war heroes

Should society do more to honour the memory of our Victoria Cross winners? MARK ANDREWS looks at the state of the graves belonging to the West Midlands' greatest war heroes

BARRY Booth wanders among the unkept graves around St Michael's Church in Brierley Hill.

"Some of them are really overgrown, with weeds everywhere," he says. "I'm glad it's not one of those."

The 52-year-old banker from Bridgnorth is looking for the grave belonging to his great-grandfather, Sgt Anthony Booth VC.

"It looks like somebody has been doing some work to tidy it up."

But while the grave has been kept tidy, the grey headstone has not escaped the ravages of the last 113 years. The edge is jagged and the lettering on the gravestone needs cleaning.

"Anthony Booth's grave needs a fair amount of work to be done," says Gary Stapleton of the Victoria Cross Trust.

Men like Sgt Booth, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for saving a team of just eight men to safety after coming under attack from 800 enemy troops in the Zulu War, were the bravest of the brave.

Concerns

The VC is the highest honour for valour in the face of the enemy, and one would have had to have demonstrated remarkable courage to have such an award bestowed upon them.

But there are now growing concerns that the monuments dedicated to the memories of these heroes have been neglected.

Mr Stapleton, a 45-year-old businessman from Doncaster, founded the Victoria Trust after discovering that a VC local to him was lying in a neglected grave. He says his research has uncovered hundreds of examples of graves falling into disrepair, while another 78 are unmarked.

"Just about every one of these graves needs some work," he says. "All should be cleaned annually."

Some of these, such as the grave of Smethwick Second World War hero Able Seaman Billy Savage, who is buried in Falmouth, Cornwall, receive the attention they deserve. "That is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves commission, so it is cleaned once a year and should be in very good condition," says Mr Stapleton.



David Partridge, aged 92, next to the well-maintained grave of his uncle, Charles George "Gus" Bonner VC at St Mary's Church, Aldridge

But the cost of bringing all VC graves up to this standard has been estimated at £1.2 million.

"There are lots of people who say they will do the job themselves, but what we really need is money," he says.

"We don't want well-meaning people turning up with household cleaners and damaging the graves beyond repair. Cleaning gravestones is a highly skilled job."

Former Conservative Party deputy chairman Michael Ashcroft has become so concerned about the state of many of the graves that he has set aside £177,000 to spend on the graves of scores of VCs.

Lord Ashcroft has pledged to spend up to £1,000 on restoration work for memorials to the recipients of any of the VCs which form part of his collection, which is on display at the Imperial War Museum in London.

"Nearly 1,000 recipients of the VC are buried in churchyards in the UK, and many of these graves have fallen into a pitiable state," says the peer.

"I hope that my pledge will encourage others, including the Government and concerned groups and individuals, to find the funds to restore every derelict grave of a VC recipient to its former glory."

One West Midlands VC buried in an unmarked grave is James Thompson, who was given the medal for saving the life of his captain during the Siege of Delhi in 1857, when that officer was surrounded by a party of Ghazees.

There is no headstone to mark his grave at Queen Street Cemetery in Walsall, but at least there is now a plaque on the cemetery gates.

Yet his great-grandson Michael Thompson says even getting that modest memorial installed involved a lengthy process.

"It was the council, initially they said Sister Dora's plaque was the only one allowed on the gates, but eventually they said we could do it as long as it was in keeping with it. It went on for quite a while."

Pte Thompson's memory is also honoured by a plaque at Walsall Museum, which also commemorates the life of Walsall's other two VCs, John Henry Carless and Charles "Gus" Bonner.

Serving

Ordinary Seaman Carless was serving at a gun aboard HMS Caledon during the Second Battle of Heligoland Bight in the First World War.

Even after being fatally wounded, he continued to go about his duties, getting up after he collapsed to try to help the crew.

His body was never recovered, but there is also a bust at the Walsall Museum in his memory.

Captain Bonner who was awarded the medal for his fierce fighting at the Bay of Biscay during the First World War, was cremated following his death in 1951.

His ashes were buried at St Mary's Church in Aldridge, and a headstone was installed following the death of his widow in the 1970s.

Today the memorial is in good condition, being lovingly maintained by his surviving family.

"A friend of mine cuts the grass around it, and we have planted a lot of bulbs so it looks nice in the spring," says his nephew David Partridge, who is now aged 92.

Mr Partridge says even as a young man, he was left in no doubt that his uncle was a man of great courage, and he does believe that the younger generation recognises the importance of preserving the memories of what our forefathers achieved in the field of battle.

But Gary Stapleton says it is important that we all back up our respect with hard cash, as we all owe it to those who risked - and often gave - their lives for our freedom.

Petition on plans for new takeaway

MORE than 100 residents rallied a second petition to succeed in their fight against plans to transform an off-licence into a takeaway in Kingswinford.

Increased traffic, litter and yobs using the takeaway as a hang out were among fears from residents about the scheme.

Dudley Council planners have refused the change of use application for the shop, in Granville Drive, citing the concerns as the overriding factor. It is the second petition residents have risen against separate plans to refit the shop as a takeaway or fish and chip shop.

But there has been a 975-strong counter petition and letters lodged in support of the plans by developer Gurdinder Randhawa.

Ward councillors Patrick Harley, David Blood and Peter Miller wrote a joint letter, condemning the proposal. They said: "There are fears there will be strong smells and an increase in litter together with a possible increase in anti social behaviour." A statement, submitted on behalf of Mr Randhawa, said a counter petition of support with 975 signatures had been submitted.

One way is here to stay

PLANS to make a temporary one-way system in Dudley town centre permanent have been rubber-stamped by council bosses.

It was introduced in parts of High Street and Stone Street to make it easier for shoppers to walk around and included the creation of extra parking bays.

Traders have long called for more spots for shoppers to park to bring more people into the town.

The revised layout of Stone Street meant the council was able to increase the number of bays from 12 to 18.

Tea dance dates

A COMMUNITY centre in Brierley Hill will be hosting a weekly tea dance.

The sessions will run from 2pm until 4pm every Monday at Nine Locks Community Centre, Hill Street. They will start on January 14 and cost £2 each.

Refreshments will be available.

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Vascular surgery is to expand

MORE patients will receive vascular surgery at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital in the second phase of plans to create a specialist centre for the Black Country.

Surgeons are already carrying out some procedures at the site but from spring all emergency and planned operations will be done in Dudley.

Health chiefs wanted to set up the centre because evidence showed patients having complex vascular surgery have a much better chance of survival if their operation was carried out at a specialist centre.

Vascular conditions are related to blood vessels and include hardening of the arteries.

Since July emergency vascular operations and planned surgery for abdominal aortic aneurysms for patients from Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall have taken place at the centre.

From April all other planned vascular procedures such as bypasses for leg circulation problems and surgery on the arteries in the neck will also be done at Dudley. Day case surgery, such as varicose vein operations, will continue to take place at the other hospitals.

Cash aid for memorial

A WIDOW from Dudley who appealed for help over the maintenance costs of a monument in memory of her husband and fellow serviceman has been overwhelmed with support.

Phyllis Coyle, aged 85, appealed through the Chronicle for help in raising cash for the memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, near Alrewas.

The monument is to sailors in the Second World War who risked their lives delivering supplies by sea to Russia. She said: "The support has been overwhelming." To support Mrs Coyle call 01384 572405.

Top styling tips

TOP hairdresser Simon Shaw passed on his expertise to Halesowen College students.

He talked about the equipment available for different hairstyles. Mr Shaw, who is European artistic director for Wahl, gave away prizes including some top-of-the-range Wahl Academy cordless clippers.

Award-winning stylist Graham cutting out



Salon colleagues with Graham as he retires

FROM afros and beehives to bob cuts and mullets, award-winning hairdresser Graham Middleton has seen them all during his five decades in the trade.

But now he has hung up his scissors and blow dryer after retiring from his salon Graham's Hair and Beauty.

The 65-year-old, from Dudley, has seen many changing styles and techniques in the industry since first starting out as a Saturday boy in a Wall Heath barber shop at the age of 15.

He quickly learned on the job picking up techniques and developing his skills

as he worked his way up from an apprentice. Just before his 21st birthday he opened his first unisex salon in Clarence Street, Upper Gornal, in 1968.

Not long after setting out on his own, there was a big change in hairdressing as blow-drying became all the rage. "In the 70s the cut and blow-dry was what everyone wanted and it's stayed that way ever since," he said.

Another shift in the industry has been the amount of money people are willing to spend on their hair.

At the time he was first starting out

a short back and sides for men would cost 4/6 or about 22p. Now the same hair cut costs £10. He said the amount of money women pay has soared especially with colouring added. "Customers especially women, are perfectly happy to spend whatever it takes to make them feel their best," he said.

About 18 years ago the salon moved to The Arcade, in Kent Street, Upper Gornal. Among his loyal customers was Louise Gutteridge, whose hair Mr Middleton has cut for around 20 years. She said: "He will be missed very much by everyone. I am sad to see him go."



Graham with some of his awards in 1970

New zoo entrance planned as part of £10m package

THEY say that first impressions count and bosses at Dudley Zoo will be hoping their new-look entrance will prove a feather in their cap when it comes to attracting more visitors.

It will be created as part of a £10.1million project to help regenerate Castle Hill.

Tourism bosses have unveiled the plans to create single point of access to the zoo, the Dudley Canal Trust and the Black Country Living Museum. A visitor entrance for the zoo and an attractive piazza will welcome families and there will be animal sculptures and seating.

Dudley Zoo's chief executive Peter Suddock said the project was a welcome boost for the zoo.

"Our customers constantly remind us this area offers both their first and last view of Dudley and thus providing a new entrance leading directly from our car park to the zoo site will greatly enhance the visitor experience," he said.

Leisure

A shared car park with 600-spaces will be created along with the visitor arrival point to be built at the back of the existing car park behind JB's.

The project will see a secondary road being built to link the access road to the visitor reception for Dudley Zoo, which will primarily be used by coaches.

Regeneration bosses at Dudley Council have announced the latest revamp in Castle Hill aimed

by Heather Large

at making it "a regional leisure destination".

They want to boost combined visitor numbers to one million people a year and bring in millions of pounds in extra revenue.

A listed office building attached to a Tecton building at the zoo will be refurbished, new parking spaces will be created and new signs, seats, lighting and planting will be installed.

Parking for the zoo will continue to be available throughout the work, which is due to be completed towards the end of 2014.

"We will be working with the local authority to ensure the phasing of any work is carried out to minimise disturbance to our customers," said Mr Suddock.

A 12-week consultation is under way. Cash for the project has come from Dudley Council, Dudley Zoo the Black Country Living Museum and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project was also awarded a £4.5m grant.



An artist's impression of how the new entrance to Dudley Zoo could look under the plans which were unveiled



How generations of visitors have come to know the entrance to the zoo with its distinctive curved roof

2012 among wettest

THE Met Office has confirmed 2012 was the second wettest year the country has seen since records began.

It was just a few millimetres short of the mark set in 2000. The official records go back 102 years.

The news comes as the River Severn has peaked at Bewdley. The exceptionally wet year was characterised by a dry start which quickly gave way to very wet weather, with April and June both being the wettest months on record.

NEWS

in brief

Plan for homes under spotlight

PLANS for 19 new homes on a former industrial site in Lye have been recommended for the green light.

Outline proposals for the site in High Street have been submitted with Dudley Council.

The developer wants to build five houses and 14 flats. One letter of objection had been received from a neighbouring business in Attwood Street, Lye.

The scheme will be discussed by the planning committee.

Homes scheme set for approval

REVISED plans to convert the boiler house at the former Wordsley Hospital into apartments are poised to be given the go-ahead.

Shropshire Homes had previously been granted permission to create 11 new homes.

But the scheme has since been amended bringing the number of apartments down to nine.

The developer said all but one of the units would have one bedroom with the remaining apartment having two bedrooms.

Free bus travel to help get jobs

THE unemployed in Worcestershire will be able to travel free on most bus services during January - thanks to an extended passenger scheme to help them find work in a New Year boost.

Five major bus companies - First, Arriva, Stagecoach, Go-Ahead and National Express - offer the scheme nationally but, in Worcestershire, it has been extended.

£1,500 is raised by Round Table

STOURBRIDGE and Brierley Hill Round Table's annual Christmas sleigh outings raised nearly £1,500 for charity.

The money will be donated to Living Springs in Stourton, near Stourbridge, which provides care and support to vulnerable children.

Cash machine bid

PLANS to install a cash machine at a post office in Dudley have been submitted.

Bosses at Wrens Nest Post Office, Summer Road have applied for permission to fit the external ATM.

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A SURVEY by Waitrose reveals that most men haven't a clue how to cook toad in the hole. The secret, chaps, is to buy only the very freshest toads, available at any branch. Don't be afraid to ask.

□□□□□□□□

BINOCULARS used upside-down, eyes that changed colour from youth to old age, a too-modern car. The BBC spy yarn *Restless* has provided rich pickings for us sad old souls who enjoy spotting the errors. For me, the most obvious one was the restaurant scene featuring tables laid with damn great quarter-litre wine glasses. In wartime Britain, wine was sipped from small glasses. It was not until the 1970s that we learned to knock it back by the bottle.

□□□□□□□□

A REPORTER asks a councillor whether Birmingham Airport should be renamed in honour of Ozzy Osbourne and the councillor says: "It's an interesting idea and I've got an open mind." I bet there's as much chance of renaming the airport after Ozzy as there is of styling it after that other son of Brum, Enoch Powell. As a general rule, when you put a local hero's name above your airport, as with John Lennon in Liverpool or George Best in Belfast, the place is forever branded as second-rate and provincial. "Birmingham Airport" is a world brand and has a simple dignity. Don't mess with it.

□□□□□□□□

THE NHS spends more than £5,000 million a year dealing with obesity. It is, in every sense, a growth industry. Now, the Royal College of Physicians claims the service is inadequate. In other words, we ought to spend a few billion more. The NHS was created to cure people who fall ill or infirm. Since when did stuffing your face become an illness? And why should we taxpayers fork out a fortune for people who could cure themselves simply by eating less?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star



Tongue in cheek – Deb Nicholls strikes a pose for May, mimicking Marilyn



The Fab Four – Kevin Lowe, Jacky Fellows, Deb Nicholls and Sue Hawkins and the original and iconic Beatles shot

Year of double teks

A DUDLEY theatre group have created a cheeky spoof calendar sending up some classic moments in the cinema and popular culture.

The first ever "Froggatts & Cotterills" calendar, produced for 2013, features leading lights from the popular Fizzog Theatre Production Company.

For some they are fully clothed and in others members of the theatre group strip off down to their flat caps.

"Our show is a bit cheeky – and we aimed for a Black Country parody of some well-known photos from film and pop," said Jacky Fellows, co-director of the Fizzog

Theatre Production Company.

In the "Calendar Girls" style cover shot, the Fizzogs pose naked around a piano, but with some strategic cover.

"We weren't embarrassed about taking our clothes off for some of the photos – but it was freezing cold," joked Jacky.

Photographs for the calendar were taken on location at Dudley's Black Country Living Museum by David Hubbal and edited by Terry Hawkins.

Among the shots is a fully clothed picture of members of the group walking over a zebra crossing in Victorian garb, captioned "the Fab Four" in a witty nod to the iconic Beatles shot. Jacky, aged 50, from Wombourne, imitates Jack Nicholson in The

Shining with October's offering, captioned "Here's Millie".

Deb Nicholls, aged 40, from Stourbridge, strikes a Marilyn Monroe pose for May, recreating the iconic picture of a white skirt billowing over a subway vent – except in her case, she is on a street at the Black Country Living Museum.

Soulfully

James Collins, from Wolverhampton, stripped to the waist, gazes soulfully at a loaf of bread for the March shot.

Jacky, Deb and Sue Hawkins, aged 40, from Wordsley, set up Fizzogs about 12 years ago after studying together for their HND in community theatre at Dudley College. Their

numbers are boosted by friends and fellow performers, including Dave Morris, aged 72, from Stourbridge, a writer and historian, who was their college lecturer.

Some of the shots in the calendar are raunchier, such as the "Keepin' it clean" picture for July, showing Mr Morris in a bath tub with nothing more than a packet of soap powder preserving his modesty.

The calendar is proving popular and is selling well. The 100 originally produced have been boosted by another print run of 60 and more could be printed if needed.

Copies are available, priced £4.99, from the Black Country Living Museum, by emailing fizzogproductions.co.uk or calling 07757 424618.

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Church stall group's call for backing

A CHURCH preservation group in Dudley is looking for sponsors for its weekly market stall.

Campaigners attend the town's market every Saturday in a bid to raise funds to help reopen St John's Church, Kates Hill.

But proceeds have dipped and now organisers are appealing for kind-hearted people or businesses to sponsor their stall to cover the rent.

This will enable all the cash raised to go straight to the funds to restore and reopen the church.

The stall had been raking in up to £250 each Saturday but this has now fallen to around £130.

Chairman of St John's Church Preservation Group Deb Brownlee said: "To help us stay on the market we are asking for sponsors for the £22.56 weekly rental.

"We have a sponsor board on the stall and we give them advertising for the week through our Facebook page. The sponsorship makes a huge difference not just to our income for the day, but to the morale of the volunteers."

Anyone interested in sponsoring the stall can register at savestjohnchurch@hotmail.co.uk or by calling 07871 195042.

Extra patrols

EXTRA police patrols have been carried out in Lye following complaints about speeding cars.

Residents have reported vehicles travelling too fast along Talbot Street and about cars illegally parked.

Serial bride Julie finds Mr Right at the fifth attempt

Marriages do not always work out – just ask Black Country bride-to-be Julie Cooper, who is preparing for her fifth wedding. LOUISE JEW met her

THE Abba song I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do could have been written with Julie Cooper in mind, as she prepares to wed for the fifth time.

The 55-year-old serial bride, nicknamed Elizabeth Taylor by her friends, has married in each of the last four decades – and is now engaged again this time to 61-year-old Paul Burcher.

"This time it's for keeps," she vows, sporting a sparkling new solitaire diamond ring. "I've fallen in love too quick a few times. But I love Paul to bits and want to settle down for good now."

Julie, originally from Kidderminster but now living in Rages Road, Kingswinford, says it's certainly not wedding cake that keeps taking her back to the Register Office – she hates it. She joked: "It's the frilly frocks, which I never had when I was young."

"I've always worn white to my weddings before but this time it's going to be a red dress. They've always been from charity shops before, apart from the last one, which I bought for £50 from an advert. This time, it will be a designer dress, which Paul will buy, and we plan to marry next year in either Barbados or Mexico, probably on a beach."

Like every little girl, Julie once dreamed of a fairytale wedding – but, so far, none has quite matched up to that. Here, she talks through the saga of her marital career:

Wedding Number One

Julie fell for Leonard Maund when she was 16 and he was the brother of her next-door neighbour in Jubilee Drive, Kidderminster.

He was 19, seemed mature and he started giving her lifts to and from her job in a burger bar in Stourport.

Leonard popped the question and they married at Kidderminster Register Office, then in Church Street, in September 1973. Julie and Leonard split up in 1976 when she fell for another man – whom she did not end up marrying – and



Julie with the dress she wore at her last wedding

were divorced in 1979.

Wedding Number Two

Julie had just come through a relationship with Colin Mahoney, father of her son Jason, but he went off to work on oil rigs in Saudi Arabia and didn't come back.

She teamed up with another man but it was not going well – and then Derek Portman crossed her path and, after a whirlwind courtship, she moved in with him.

They married in 1981 at Dudley Register Office.

She went on to have four children with Derek – Dean, born in 1984, Lena a year later, Penny in 1987 and Shane in 1992. But Julie says she and Derek did not exactly see eye to eye and, in 1995, she "did a bunk" with the children to live in a caravan on the Isle of Wight.

Wedding Number Three

Julie vowed she'd stay single after flitting to the isle. But it wasn't long before she came across Benny Cooper, who had got to know her sons while out fishing. He proposed and they married in 1997 at an Isle of Wight register office. But, it was not an auspicious start when both bride and groom ended up in a police cell on their wedding night and by 2003 Julie was divorced again.

Wedding Number Four

It was Benny – again. He came back into her life, wooed her and she agreed to remarry him. The ceremony took place in 2005 at Kidderminster Register Office. But by 2007, the marriage was on the rocks again and they divorced after she moved to Spring Parklands in Dudley.

Wedding Number Five . . . ?

Julie was determined to remain single yet again, but reckoned without running into old friend Paul Burcher at her daughter's home in Dudley in February 2010. They had last seen each other more than 30 years earlier, when he used to work with her second husband, Derek.

"I'd always had a thing for Paul but used to think he wouldn't give me the time of day," said Julie.

"But, after meeting him all those years later, he invited me to go to the pictures. It was the first proper date I'd ever been taken on." On the way back from a short break they visited the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham.

"We were both admiring the same ring in the window, he proposed, and bought it for me. We got engaged nearly two years ago, and this is the longest courtship I've had. I really want to settle down now."

NEWS in brief

Library times will get new schedule

WORCESTERSHIRE County Council's mobile library service will be operating with new timetables from this month.

Stourport Library manager Maureen Hobbs said: "Worcestershire's mobile libraries are very popular and it's really important to our users that the service is there for them."

New timetables will be available soon on the county council website by visiting www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries from local libraries or by phoning the Worcestershire Hub on 01905 822722.

Action on path vow by council

ACTION is being taken to improve a countryside footpath to a new school in a village near Kidderminster.

It follows concerns raised by parents and local residents about muddy sections of the path, linking the village to the recently completed Chadlesley Corbett Primary School. The council is planning a permanent solution. In the meantime short-term remedial works are taking place.

Plans for flats

PLANS for two apartment blocks in Lye have been lodged with council chiefs.

If the project is granted planning permission, they will be built on a plot of vacant land in Vicarage Road. The proposals have been submitted to Dudley Council.

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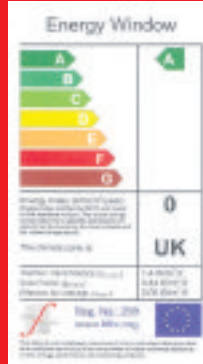
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NEWS

Start for £2m museum of glass rests on funds

WORK to create a world-renowned museum showcasing Stourbridge's glass heritage could start this summer once a £2 million funding bid is secured.

Contractors could begin work to transform the former Stuart Crystal glassworks, in Wordsley, within weeks of a successful European funding deal. Site owners Complex Development Projects has lodged its own application to source cash from the European Regional Development Fund.

It has secured the support of Dudley Council to bid for £2,075,000 from Europe to begin work on the multi-million attraction.

Documentation from the two parties has now been lodged with European officials to be discussed within the next few weeks.

Campaigners hope the attraction would emulate the Corning Museum of Glass in the US.

Complex Development Projects director Ian Harrabin today declared the step "fantastic" news for the future of the project.

"It is good that we are now moving forward and it is fantastic news that the application will now be looked at," he said.

He added a separate application to the Heritage Lottery Fund will also be made around June.

Council leader, Councillor David Sparks, said: "This is a complex deal involving a bid by a private developer for European funding which requires the support of the local authority. The letter of support has been sent for the application to proceed." The application will bid for a share of remaining money which had not been spent following the last round of European funding.

That's entertainment...

HISTORIAN Ned Williams will give a talk on entertainment in the Black Country in days gone by on January 16 at St Mary's Church Centre in Kingswinford.

The Black Country Society talk starts 7.45pm.

Scheme fit for the young



Jess Potter and Tom Gadd promote junior deals at Stourbridge Leisure Centre

A NEW leisure membership scheme at pools in Dudley is aiming to get youngsters fitter.

The scheme will see a junior membership category for children, aged 17 and under, to help them save money while getting exercise and enjoying sports.

Councillor Tracy Wood said: "Our leisure centres offer excellent facilities at affordable prices and I'm sure this offer will encourage young people to take up regular exercise and enjoy

the benefits of sport." A junior membership includes a free gym induction and unlimited access to lifestyles gyms, squash, table tennis and badminton courts at weekends. It also includes public swimming times and a range of fitness classes.

Membership is available at the Crystal, Dudley and Halesowen leisure centres and costs £13 a month. For more information call the leisure centres on 01384 812 800 or visit www.dudley.gov.uk/sport

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LETTERS

We need a say over who we pay

IT is plain to see that the country cannot afford the 2.5 million (true figure nearer 4m) unemployed now.

It must also be noted that our European masters have said that we cannot withhold benefits and health care from European migrants, legal or otherwise, that come here and, also, they will be entitled to housing benefits, child benefits and pension credits etc etc.

How on earth can we expect this country to support Europe's unemployed and their medical/housing needs when they get here?

More must be done to wipe out fox hunts

SEEING on television that a hunt had been prosecuted and fined for fox hunting, it was pleasing to know that some action had been taken against these lawbreakers.

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Every weekend these arrogant people gallop around the country and it would appear that there is no one to stop them.

Their actions are barbaric and should be stopped.

It has taken many years by many people including myself to make fox hunting with dogs illegal and I beg all readers if they see any of this going on to report it to the RSPCA or the police.

This vile practice must be wiped out.

KATH TIMMINS
Larch Road
Kingswinford

Now is the time to call a halt to European dictates and take back control of our own country.

I voted to join the common market in the 70s for trade, only it was never put to me that I would be expected to be governed by people not elected by me and with no consideration to my people/nation but to milk us dry to support ideals that are great when someone else is paying for them.

If you fail to give us the vote then at least put in place stipulation that you have to pay into the benefit systems and the health systems for a period of

no less than three years before you can get anything out of it. Also the maximum payment for benefits/housing should not exceed the takehome pay of the average working man who pays National Insurance/tax out of his net monies.

This country is a very tolerant one but the taxpayers and the people who care want to be allowed to pick and choose who and when people are allowed in, what they are entitled to and also those who need kicking out.

BRIAN J WILLIAMS
Wombourne

Thanks to everyone who came to our aid

I WOULD like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who helped when my husband was taken ill at B & M Brierley Hill while out and about on Saturday December 22.

We were overwhelmed with offers of help and support.

Unfortunately we do not have details of anyone who helped.

However starting with the gentleman who stopped his car to help; to the various members of B & M staff, customers - including the lady who called the ambulance - to the technicians who checked my husband over and gave him a clean bill of health.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone of you.

MRS J NAGINGTON
Blenheim Road
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LETTERS to the Editor

POST

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Bus stop drunks a bad image for city

CAN something be done about the half dozen or so drunks, and dog, that constantly congregate at the bus stop in Market Street, Wolverhampton.

They are there at all hours of the day swigging super strength larger, swearing and even on occasion fighting, taking up seats intended for bus passengers (they never actually use the buses), and littering with their empty cans.

Recently one afternoon they were there as usual, almost up to fighting, their language was particularly foul, a mother was trying to move out of the way so that her young son was not subjected to their behaviour.

Last week I was speaking to a chap who had come into the city for a day out to have a look around, he couldn't believe this behaviour was tolerated and this was the image of our city he took away with him. I'm guessing he won't be back any time soon. Is there not an Alcohol Restricted Zone in place in this area and if there is, why is it not enforced?

I am sick to death of coming out of work every evening and having to witness this.

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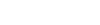
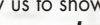
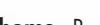
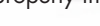
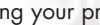
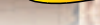
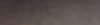
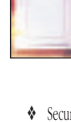


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NEWS

£1m plans to recreate waterfalls in parklands

WORK is under way on a £1 million masterplan to recreate flowing waterfalls and cascades in an 18th century Dudley parkland ahead of its reopening.

Under the plans, visitors will be allowed to walk through the Hagley Hall estate, near Stourbridge, for the first time since the mid 1980s.

The 350-acre parkland was closed to the public by the previous Lord Cobham, John Lyttelton, following vandal attacks.

Now the 12th viscount Cobham, Christopher Lyttelton, says reopening the 18th century Hagley Park is a priority within the next few years.

Works to restore the Wychbury Obelisk monument have been completed along with the restoration of the hall's original pitched roof. The next stage of the plans sees the restoration of a landscaped cascades - a series of waterfalls running down to the Palladian bridge near St John's Church in the grounds of the hall.

But the stream needs to be cleared and drainage improved to allow the water to run smoothly. Trees are being cut back and silt removed from ornamental ponds.

Work is expected to continue into the new year with the possibility of one or two mature trees being felled to return the land to its original state. Once finished the cascades will feature in walking trails throughout the 350 acre park.

"I'm delighted the works are under way as there are people who have put a lot of effort into this," said Lord Cobham.

"It has been fascinating for me to discover more about the parks."

Talking about history



Assistant librarian Lorraine Bell is looking forward to the talk about Victorian and Edwardian Buildings

FROM the lost industries of Birmingham to murders in the Black Country - a library in Halesowen has a talk for anyone interested in local history.

Halesowen Library in Queensway Mall, is holding monthly lectures throughout the year.

They start with a talk on Victorian and Edwardian Buildings in the

Black Country on January 16. Assistant librarian Lorraine Bell said: "Local people always enjoy the talks as they often recall memories they may have forgotten about the area."

The talks attract about 30 people and last for an hour.

For a full list of the talks call into the library or visit www.dudley.gov.uk.

Business group meeting

A NETWORKING group for businesswomen in Worcestershire will hold its next meeting on January 15.

The informal get together will take place at The Hop Pole Inn in Bewdley from 10am.

Members usually meet on the third Tuesday of every month.

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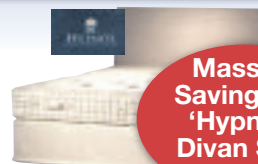
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NEWS

Finals on the cards



Nick John, has reached the finals of a poker competition

A KIDDERMINSTER card sharp is hoping he will be dealt a great hand after making it through to the national finals of a poker contest.

Father-of-two Nick John, aged 36, who works as a physiotherapist at the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford, was successful in the regional finals of the Red Tooth Poker League held at Star City in Birmingham.

He is now through to the next round of the tournament which will see him trying to win his way to Las Vegas and a jackpot of \$100,000 US.

He was among three poker players who take part in tournaments at Carters Bar, Kidderminster and who made it through to the regional finals which saw 200 people trying to battle their way through to the nationals in Sheffield.

Others taking part included Adam Lyntech and George Macklin also from Kidderminster. Nick started playing poker about 10 years ago. He said: "If I make the final 10 at Sheffield I will get a seat at Las Vegas." The finals will be held later in the year.

Widow's plea on funding for upkeep of memorial

A WIDOW from Dudley who funded a memorial to a band of previously unrecognised sailors in the Second World War is appealing for help to pay for its maintenance.

Phyllis Coyle, aged 85, used £17,000 from her own savings to pay for the monument which was unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, in August.

The memorial is a tribute to the sailors who risked their lives to deliver supplies to Russia on long, dangerous Arctic Convoys in the war.

Among the men was Mrs Coyle's husband Mick, whose dying wish was for proper recognition for their work. Mr Coyle died, aged 85, last year.

Mrs Coyle has now started fundraising after she received a £6,500 bill to pay for the maintenance of the memorial.

She has paid half of it thanks to donations from friends, but is now appealing for the remainder of the cash to secure the monument's future.

She said: "I've sent letters to more than 200 people asking for help to maintain the memorial."



Widow Phyllis Coyle

"There was nothing for this brave group of men before this monument, and there would be nothing standing in this country if it went."

Mrs Coyle, of Pensnett, received a major boost after Prime Minister David Cameron promised to present medals in their honour.

Anyone who can support the fund should contact

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MEMORY LANE



Sunbeam cars gathered for the unveiling of a blue plaque on the site in Penn



The racing car Toodles V at Brooklands, where it broke eight world records



Where the work took place – the Sunbeam racing car workshop in 1922

Days when Sunbeam raced ahead in Grand Prix stakes

by Alec Brew

FOR more than 60 years Britain has dominated Grand Prix manufacturing, but it was not always thus.

In the early days it was French cars which led the way, and, in the days before the World Championship, it was winning the French Grand Prix which was recognised as the pinnacle of motor-racing achievement.

The first British car to win the French Grand Prix, in 1923, was made right here in Wolverhampton, in Sunbeam's Blakenhall factory, but it's designer was a Frenchman, Louis Coatalen.

He was a Breton, born on September 11, 1879, and worked for a number of French car manufacturers before arriving in England in 1900 to work for the Crowden Company, and then becoming chief engineer at Hillman in Coventry.

In 1909 he was recruited by the Sunbeam Motor Car Co in Blakenhall, to be their chief engineer, and immediately planned to enter motor-racing. He began designing purpose-built racing cars, which led to the first major triumph, a win in the 1912 Coupe de l'Auto in Dieppe, Sunbeams coming 1st, 2nd and 3rd,

eclipsing and astonishing the major European manufacturers.

In 1912 Coatalen also designed his first aero-engine a 150hp side valve V8, followed by a 225 hp V12, which he first tested in a specially-built racing car named Toodles V.

In October 1913, this car, at Brooklands, broke eight world endurance speed records in an hour and a half. There is no doubt that Coatalen was a talented, even brilliant engineer, but he was not afraid of copying others.

Devious

During 1913 Peugeot cars with twin overhead camshafts swept the board in three litre racing, and by some devious means one of these found its way to the drawing room of Coatalen's home, Waverley House on Goldthorn Hill. Here, Sunbeam mechanics stripped it down to discover its secrets, and for 1914 Sunbeam also featured twin overhead camshafts, as did the new aero-engines he designed at the start of the War.

Sunbeam was a major supplier of aero-

engines during the War and also built more than 600 aircraft, including just one of its own design the single-engine Sunbeam Bomber.

All the engines were officially called Sunbeam-Coatalen engines, but after the War they were rather eclipsed by Rolls-Royce and Napier designs.

Coatalen turned to his great ambition, to win the French Grand Prix. The Sunbeam company merged with Darraq and Talbot and Coatalen became a Director of the resulting STD Motors.

In 1923 a Sunbeam finally won the French Grand Prix, driven by Henry Seagrave, and would have won the following year but for technical problems. Coatalen also produced three different cars to break the World Land Speed Record but Sunbeam began to experience financial difficulties, and in 1934 closed down.

By that time Louis Coatalen had returned to his native France, though he had taken British citizenship. He lived there through the War and died in 1962. He had brought great fame to the Sunbeam company, and to Wolverhampton, his adopted home for over 20 years.



Louis Coatalen, then aged 33, in 1912



Coatalen, centre, examining the Sunbeam Bomber in 1917 at the airfield in Castle Bromwich

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Tony Hardiman goes on to say "We don't know how long the scheme will be available for so it's vitally important that those households that think they may be eligible should call us straight away to avoid disappointment – it's free and could make all the difference between a cold home – or a warm one."

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NEWS

Thieves ransack home of grieving grandmother

Kirstie kickstarts crafts



Elizabeth Ireland, owner of Topstitchers in Kidderminster

BUSINESS is booming for the owner of a Kidderminster haberdashery shop thanks to TV presenter Kirstie Allsopp.

The appeal for quilting, felting, patchwork and embroidery has been given a major boost by the celebrity whose programmes feature home-made items. Mrs Elizabeth Ireland, owner of Topstitchers, at Bridge Street, Kidderminster, said she had noticed "a big influx of customers

wanting to try their hand at crafts".

She said: "People both young and old and even gentlemen have been coming in wanting tools and wool to try out various crafts.

"The older generation want to try out new things and the younger ones want to try the old skills.

"Kirstie Allsopp has had a big influence on people wanting to make their own items for the home."

THIEVES have ransacked the home of a grieving Dudley pensioner stealing precious personal items – just days after the death of her granddaughter in a car crash.

The 83-year-old had returned to her home in Grantley Crescent, Kingswinford to find it had been raided. It happened just days after her granddaughter, care assistant Samantha Jennings, aged 26, was killed.

The mother-of-two was in a car on the A449 near Kidderminster which hit a tree on December 8. Samantha's mother, Debbie Jennings, said the burglary which happened just over a week later on December 16 had caused huge upset at an already difficult time.

"We are all heartbroken after losing Samantha in such a sudden and tragic way and then to find this has happened to mum just days later is very difficult to take," she said.

"The burglars have stolen jewellery including my late father's wedding ring and his Rolex Hunter pocket watch. Both are of great sentimental value and irreplaceable. We just want them returned to us.

"I would hope those who have done this were unaware of what the family was already going through, but that makes it no easier to get over."

The break-in is being investigated by Dudley CID.

Rail bridge to be repaired

REPAIR work will be carried out to a bridge over the River Severn at Bewdley. The Severn Valley Railway has unveiled plans to carry out the refurbishment on Victoria Bridge.

A timber restraint which supports the rail tracks has suffered from wet rot.



Samantha Jennings

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NEWS

Councils take back staff they made redundant

HUNDREDS of workers who were cut from councils, including Dudley, and received combined payouts of at least £3.5 million have since been re-employed by the same authorities.

A total of 354 staff were made redundant from councils in the West Midlands and Staffordshire and then taken back in other roles.

The figures were released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Dudley Council slashed 15 posts where the workers were later re-employed. Eleven of the subsequent contracts were for temporary work, and 10 of those staff are still with the authority.

Bosses refused to reveal the cost of payouts, saying it was personal information. More than half of the numbers re-employed were at Staffordshire County Council, which cut 185 staff and later brought them back since 2008/09. Combined redundancy payments for the axed staff was more than £3.4m, with 16 of the payouts topping £50,000.

Wolverhampton City Council meanwhile axed 138 people who bosses said were later "re-engaged". They included three former deputy headteachers.

Walsall re-employed 10 staff, six as agency staff and four as employees, with their original redundancy payouts costing a combined £123,769.

Staffordshire County Council bosses defended their decisions, saying 43 per cent of those axed only came back on a casual basis and 55 per cent came back under the council's wing after six months.

Service for Round Oak

A SERVICE to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the closure of Brierley Hill's Round Oak steelworks will take place on January 23 at Brierley Hill Methodist Church, Bank Street at 7.30pm.

The plant was founded by Lord Ward, later the Earl of Dudley, in 1857.

Youngsters are on the ball



Front Arthur Passey, behind, from left, Lucas Whitehouse and Noah Attwood, coach Dave Homer, Jake Cook and Harrison Arkell

YOUNGSTERS at a Kidderminster nursery have been showing off their fancy footwork during football training sessions.

Staff at the Railway Children nursery at Station Approach, Kidderminster decided to include football as part of their activities and the sessions have proved such a hit that they are to be continued.

The nursery caters for up to 38 children, aged between three months and five years old, in any one

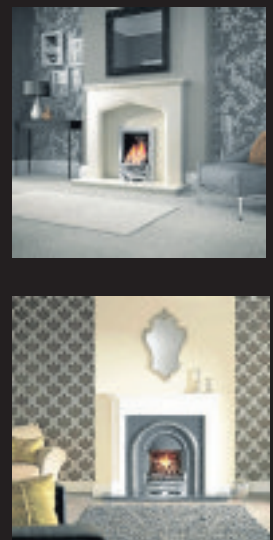
day. Football sessions take place on Wednesday afternoons. Ann Whitby, the manager of the centre, who helped found the charity nursery 28 years ago, said: "Coach Dave Homer, from Stourbridge, takes the football sessions for youngsters from nearly three old to five years old.

"We decided to introduce football about 12 months ago so the children would have a male role model.

"The youngsters learn new skills, have lots of fun."

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Consultation over future of health service

HUNDREDS are expected to take part in a consultation on the future of hospital services in Kidderminster and the rest of Worcestershire after bosses confirmed it would now take place in the summer.

NHS bosses want to overhaul health services and are drawing up detailed options for the county's three main hospital sites.

There had been fears Kidderminster Hospital could close as part of the shake-up and more than 10,000 people signed a petition against the loss.

But it was confirmed in October it would remain open along with hospitals in Redditch and Worcester.

The county's Joint Services Review (JSR) steering committee has said more work needed to be done on the plans for the three sites before they asked patients, staff and residents for the views on the proposals.

NHS Worcestershire chief executive, Eamonn Kelly, said "The JSR now expects to hold a second phase of engagement to begin in February with a full, three-month, consultation starting in the summer of 2013." There have been calls for more services to be based in Kidderminster and Wyre Forest MP Mark Garnier says he's hopeful the outcome of the review would be "positive" for Kidderminster Hospital. Around 400 people across the county have attended seven discussion events in June and July.

Black Country gives a paramedic lesson

A NORWEGIAN paramedic has been learning from his counterparts in the Black Country how lives are saved here.

Advanced paramedic Lee Farley was joined by Norwegian Paramedic Hans Sigvart Hansen for a 4.30pm - 2.30am shift on a rapid response car in the Black Country.

Mr Sigvart Hansen, who was visiting the UK for the third time, works for Vinjes Ambulance Service based in Hommelvik, Sor-Trondelag.

In the quiet mountainous region, the nearest hospital is two hours away.

Dudley-based paramedic Mr Farley said: "It was really interesting to find out about the differences between the two services."

"It was clear that the main difference was the shift work: in Norway they do 24-hour shifts and every few

weeks of their rota they start on Friday and finish on Monday.

"Hans said they are trained to use a lot more drugs than our paramedics as they are so remote and miles away from the nearest hospital."

"With mountains in the area they cover, they are obviously equipped with snow mobiles and six wheeled ambulances which contain three day survival packs for prolonged rescues and in case adverse weather hampers their journey."

Hope

The two were also able to compare weather conditions, with the top temperature during Mr Sigvart Hansen's UK shift reaching two degrees.

This was toasty compared to his average shift in Norway at this time of year, where temperatures usually linger around the -33 degrees mark.

It is hoped Mr Sigvart Hansen can visit again next year.



Paramedic Hans Sigvart Hansen who spent time in the Black Country

Hotel wants to expand its wedding days

A HOTEL on a country house estate near Kidderminster has unveiled major expansion plans to cater for larger wedding parties and conferences after turning away bookings. Up to 12 jobs will be created in the move at Brockencote Hall.

Bosses at the Chaddesley Corbett venue want to install a permanent marquee and more spacious facilities to enable them to cater for 200 guests due to a lack of room for bookings of more than 80 people, which is losing it thousands of pounds in business.

The venue is licensed for civil wedding ceremonies and can accommodate up to 42 overnight guests.

Owners Eden Hotel Collection have submitted plans to Wyre Forest District Council. It states the hotel had received more than 30 inquiries from people interested in holding a function in excess of 80 people.

It said the marquee-style function room would help to "secure Brockencote Hall's place as a nationally recognised resort hotel".

Eden Hotel Collection bought the property for £3 million in 2011 and managing director Mark Chambers said: "Since we bought the hotel, it's gone from strength to strength. There's a huge demand for weddings in the high end market and we're trying to respond to that demand."

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FOCUS ON BLACKHEATH

Pub lines up a host of events to enjoy

A BLACKHEATH pub has announced a bumper month of events to get the year going with a bang.

The Knights Quest, High Street Blackheath has a line up of tribute acts, karaoke and wet visitors whistles this month.

Tomorrow night up and coming singer Danieal will perform modern hits from 9-2pm, tickets cost £3.

On the following night a live band will be filling the venue with club and dance floor anthems also from 9-2pm, tickets cost £3.

Then on Tuesday night variety performer Adrian Michaels will be performing a free gig from 9pm until midnight.

For more information or further events go to www.theknightsquest.co.uk/events.

A meeting to air your views

A NEIGHBOURHOOD forum meeting is being held for people in Blackheath next month.

Sandwell councillors, police officers and fire fighters will be on hand to answer questions at Central Methodist Church, High Street on Wednesday February 6 at 6.30pm.

For more information telephone 0121 569 4666.

Artist is adding a splash of colour to brighten up shops

MANY of Blackheath's rundown shops are to be revitalised thanks to a local artist.

by Tom Mason

do work in the community people always come up and see what you're doing, it is almost like an educational workshop.

"Although there is only limited funding for this project, I hope that other businesses see the difference it's making and will donate more money to continue the work throughout the area."

Jennifer Hodgetts, secretary for Shell Corner Partnership said: "We hope the artworks will make the area more beautiful because it is in need of change."

Wonderful

She added "Luke is a great guy and wonderful artist, no matter what idea we give him he finds a way of making it happen."

The group hope that in a few years the artworks along with other project, including a statue, could become a heritage trail that could be used by local schools to educate them about the area's past.

The next set of works will begin on January 19 when the partnership will visit businesses and choose the successful candidate.

Luke Perry, aged 29, from Stourbridge has already completed one shop front on the corner of Long Lane and Nimmings Road, with a mural featuring an artillery shell, similar to the one which gives the area its name.

The plans call for four more shops to be decorated in the coming months with paintings in the style of Victorian advertising boards and additional works hung inside empty shops in an attempt to make the area look less derelict.

Mr Perry, director of Industrial Heritage Stronghold, has been working with Shell Corner Partnership who received more than £1,500 from Dudley Council, as part of £52,623 from the government's £3 million Empty Shop fund to help the borough brighten up its shopping areas.

Mr Perry said: "It's been really great, whenever you

Give your views on public transport

Public transport users in Sandwell can give transport chiefs their views at the Your Public Transport Matters from 10am to noon at West Bromwich bus station on January 16.



A happy new rear - Martin McLauchlan, front, getting ready to work with site fitness co-ordinator Hayley Birch and fitness instructor Matt Honeyghan

Time for a happy new rear

A "HAPPY New Rear" fitness campaign is being launched to encourage residents to shed the festive season's extra pounds.

Gym staff at the Sandwell Leisure Trust centres are offering free personal programmes to members to help get them on the right track.

The fitness crew ask customers about their goals, diet and exercise preferences to work out the best programme. Free one-to-one sessions are also available to Leisure Pass Gold members.

Gold membership includes unlimited public swimming, fitness classes and gym sessions. Customers can use their membership at any Sandwell Leisure Trust site.

Membership costs £28.50 per month by direct debit.

Sandwell Leisure Trust has centres in Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Oldbury, Tipton and Wednesbury. Call 0300 012 0121 to find out more.

Proposal to turn shop into chemist

AN empty store in Blackheath may soon be turned into a pharmacy under plans submitted to Sandwell Borough Council.

The shop at 57 High Street will have work carried out to extend the rear of the premises and will be refurbished throughout to prepare it for its change of use to a Pharmacy.

Mr J Singh has applied to the council to undertake the work.

Plans outline the installation of a secure roller shutter and large illuminated sign at the front of the building.

In reports to council chiefs Mr Singh indicates he already has a client lined up to take on the tenancy of the pharmacy once a decision has been made.

Young can get career advice

YOUNGSTERS in Blackheath can visit a careers advisor later this month to discuss their future.

Blackheath library on High Street will be open to anyone aged 13-19 seeking support in finding education, employment, training or apprenticeships, on Tuesday January 22 from 1.30-4pm. Call 0121 5591884 or to speak to someone from Connexions call 0845 3520055.

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MNA Media

CLUB NEWS

Party is a popular occasion Christmas diners get ukulele entertainment

WOLLASTON E TOWNSWOMEN

CAROL services at Cobden Street Methodist Church, Wollaston and St Thomas Church, Stourbridge, during which the Wollaston Guild choir performed, were both successful occasions.

Proceeds from the service at Cobden Street Church will be sent to a children's charity, to be decided by the committee.

December 14 saw the Guild enjoying the annual Christmas party. Under the guidance of chairman Jean Latham and the committee, the party format was changed and proved to be popular with members – one to be repeated.

More than 60 members attended, together with guests from neighbouring Guilds, namely Federation, Norton, Oldswinford, Kingswinford and Grange.

Background Christmas music was played throughout the evening, and after an extensive raffle – prizes going to a mixture of members and guests – the evening passed quite quickly.

The competition involved a Christmas candle, and this was won by Peggy Homer.

At the meeting on January 8, John Billingham was speaking on Images of Worcestershire.

The competition involved a picture or photograph of Worcestershire.

The meeting place is St James Church Hall, Wollaston and non-members are most welcome.



Christmas fare at Fairlawns Hotel & Spa for Pat Whittaker, Margaret Tolley and Peggy Green

LUNCH Club friends had a very enjoyable Christmas dinner at the Old Irish Harp, Chester Road, Aldridge, on November 27. The next lunch will be at Farmer John's, Aldridge Road, Streetly, on January 29.

The festive season started well with a trip to Trentham Gardens. There were plenty of opportunities for seasonal bargains and some wonderful decorations available.

On December 6, guild members were welcomed to Fairlawns Hotel & Spa, Little Aston Road, for a superb Christmas lunch with entertainment provided afterwards by Gabriela the Ukulele Lady.

An outstanding performance by the Fed-

PELSALL E TOWNSWOMEN

eration Choir enhanced a beautiful Federation carol service, led by the Rev Phil Hoar, at St John's Church, Bloxwich.

The December meeting was a festive buffet. Donations were made to the Birmingham Children's Hospital in lieu of cards and the evening finished with a 'connecting word' quiz – with about 10 winners.

On January 17, Margaret Smallman will talk about 'Growing Up in a Corner Shop'. The competition is a decorative tin.

Food Bank items collected

DUDLEY LIONS CLUB

DUDLEY Lions Club wishes to say thank you to Tesco Extra Burnt Tree and all its customers who donated items of food and money to our charity food collection at the store on December 8/9.

Monies donated were spent on food items to add to the food collection. A

massive 663.1kg of food items and 8kg of non-food items was collected over the two days which was then passed on to the Black Country Food Bank where it

will be used to assist families and individuals who are in need. This is 33 per cent up on our collection of last year.

We would like to say thank you to you all for their kindness and generosity.

Best Wishes for the New Year from everyone at Dudley Lions.

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Time to Care...

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There is a time when most of us will need some sort of care in our daily lives. It is the price that goes with extending our lifespan. The majority of us will benefit from relatives or close friends helping out but for some the only options available are either move out of our home and into a care establishment or pay for care at home. The preference for most of us would be to stay put in our own abode - as the saying goes "there's no place like home". It may not be an age issue, disability and illness can sometimes render day to day living difficult without the help of external assistance.

Stiled Home Services have grown organically from a straight forward home cleaning operation to now providing extensive and individually tailored care packages for people who wish to maintain their independence and quality of life in their own home. Christine and Michelle are the Mother and Daughter combination that have evolved their organisation to a highly reputable and well regarded business in the South Birmingham area.

"We took the first step by extending our cleaning operation to include "Companion" cleaning. This was a result of the feedback we were getting from our staff that

highlighted the need to offer companionship to clients whilst undertaking regular cleaning duties". This was to be the catalyst for the growth that has occurred since 2007.

The whole organisation grew and the experience that both Christine had as an Auxiliary Nurse and Michelle's as a Care Manager were put into practice. The whole emphasis of this business is to give maximum respect to their clients, client's families and friends.

"Our vision was to create a caring organisation that treats people the way we wanted to be treated ourselves. We wanted the staff to become our extended family and the clients the same. People are often very reluctant to admit they need help, they feel they are a burden and many felt that the best way forward was to struggle on alone. What they found was that by delegating some of their daily tasks to us it gave them a consistent routine, a purpose and a return of self-worth that is so often lacking in people who are living alone or at a distance from their relatives.

One important issue is the cost of Home Care which can often be the stumbling block for people considering the service. "Quite often people will qualify for the Attendance Allowance that is available as a Government Benefit (check out www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)

Michelle pointed out. "Unfortunately up to 80% of people do not know that they are entitled to the Attendance Allowance, many assume that they do not fit the profile but many do. This can make a massive difference as it can pay up to £51.85 per week towards their care costs. One of the first things we do for any new or prospective clients is to guide them through the process".

Caring for an ageing relative is a skilled task. It is made more difficult as memory tends to fade with age and people begin to lose their memories which family members find difficult to cope with. With loss of memory comes loss of self worth. Stiled Home Services Staff are trained specifically to deal this issue. "We can often slow the process down for our clients as we start a Reminiscence Book", says



Michelle. "We record lots of personal information about the client, where they lived, worked, went to school and other important aspects of their life. This helps them keep those memories and more importantly gives our staff key insights into the person they are caring for. This helps to strengthen the bond between the carer and the client"

The most important aspect of releasing relative's time from the care they provide is that they can go back to being the relative. This improves the quality and the length of time they spend with their loved one at a very important part of their life. This can reduce stress all round as the weight of responsibility is shared with Stiled Home Services.

Stiled can provide as little as half an hour a week and upwards. They even undertake night sits for times when clients are unwell or recovering from treatment. "We are flexible in our approach but create routines that our clients become comfortable with. Our staff are the key, they communicate between themselves so that continuity and consistency are not compromised. We do not engage in "call cramming" like some agencies do. We understand our clients sometimes need a bit more time and attention and we allow the staff to pick up on this and deliver the best service we possibly can.

If we were able to arrange our own care now we would undoubtedly ensure we get the best we could. This is the minimum that our loved ones deserve at a time when it counts the most. With Stiled Home Services you can regain peace of mind and improve the quality of the time you have left with your loved ones. Just call for a confidential chat about your circumstances and you'll find the weight being lifted straight away. It's time to care ...

What Their Clients Say....

"From my initial meeting with the owner of the agency everything has been organised in a caring manner. She attended Social Service Meetings so knew from the start exactly what issues would need addressing. As well as providing morning and evening care the staff takes my parents to appointments and does jobs around the house. Stiled's aim was to stop me being the carer so I could become the daughter again. This aim was fulfilled within days of them taking over. I know my parents are cared for. The peace of mind is wonderful.

Elizabeth F (Daughter of clients)

I have an elderly cousin once removed who lives alone, has psychotic depression and for whom I had the power of attorney. I was at my wits end trying to look after her (I live ¾ of an hour away) and liaise with all the relevant services etc. I first booked Stiled Home Services to come in and do her shopping to at least relieve me of that, my relative was frightened of anyone but me coming in. Since then SHS have taken over her personal care and her housework. Her mental state is now better than it has been for years and she looks forward to them coming each day - they are wonderful.

Alison W (Relative)

Friendly, professional staff who visit my mother twice a week (and occasional weekends) whilst I am at work. They help to give peace of mind that my mother is OK and that someone is there for her while I'm away. Someone for her to talk to and can listen with an interest whilst still keeping a confidence, is sometimes just simply of great benefit to her.

Alan P (Son of Client)

Stiled Home Services

WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE NEEDS CARE THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

ABOUT STILED HOME SERVICES

Here at Stiled Home Services our aim is to aid our clients in their own homes to maintain their independence and their feeling of self worth and dignity.

- We offer a fully bespoke home care service which can be tailored to suit all your needs. All our clients have different requirements which is why we are on hand to deal with any situation, from short term to long term.
- Temporary respite care replaces the normal care provided by family members or a friend, giving them a break from the responsibility of providing continual care.
- Short-term care to attend to someone that has been discharged from a hospital and requires care during healing Long-term support and friendship for someone who is beginning to struggle with living by themselves, but who doesn't want to be forced into move to a nursing home.

Personal Care

- Bathing - maintain personal hygiene
- Toilet needs
- Cooking meals
- Mealtime assistance
- Prompt Medication
- Personal appearance to Hair Care

Household tasks

- Housework
- Shopping
- Washing/ironing
- Repairs to clothes
- Collecting pensions, prescriptions
- Paying bills

Movement

- Mobility around the house
- Getting into and out of bed
- Using simple equipment
- Completing tasks outside of the house - shopping etc.
- Activities throughout the day

Social Connection

- Discussion and Chats
- Remaining in touch with friends and family
- Pursuing interests and hobbies
- Keeping pet animals

STILED HOME SERVICES OBJECTIVES

We offer skilled, trustworthy home care to enable people to live in their home as happily as they would normally. All our clients are treated with maximum respect, not just personally but relatives and friends also. Uphold the human and citizenship rights for our clients and those who visit them.

We will always support the decisions of our clients and advise them should this be needed. At the same time, we like to encourage our clients to participate in outings and activities they will certainly enjoy. Confidential approach is always taken and anything our staff are told is strictly kept to themselves



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NEWS

Ducks off, water's back as river levels hit event



Bewdley mayor, John Latham, with Lions president Terry White, best dressed duck winner, George Harding, second place is Ozzy Beswick, both from Bewdley

Picture by Colin Hill

ORGANISERS OF Bewdley's traditional duck race are hopeful of rescheduling the event for later in the year after it was postponed due to the swollen River Severn.

Following weeks of heavy rain and with the river still yet to reach its peak, Kidderminster and District Lions Club was forced to cancel Tuesday's New Year event.

The club has been hosting the race

for around 20 years and it was the first time it has been called off.

Talks are now under way to rearrange the race with Easter Bank Holiday weekend among the suggestions. The Environment Agency said the river level was expected to peak at more than 4.12 metres.

Flood barriers are in place along Severnside North and South and officials said they were continuing to monitor the situation. The race was postponed due to fears for the safety of canoists who gather the ducks after the event.



The barricades in place in Bewdley as the River Severn swells creating high water levels



The extent of the swell, as indicated by the covered up arches of the bridge over the Severn at Bewdley

Despite the New Year's Day race being called off, a couple of youngsters still turned out with their homemade ducks for the fancy dress competition.

Terry White, president of the Kidderminster and District Lions Club said said everyone had been "disappointed" it could not go ahead.

But he praised the two youngsters - George Harding and Ozzy Beswick, both aged three, for still turning out with their colourful creations and were rewarded with prizes.

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* The "from" price and price bands vary for each show - see brochure for details. Single room supplements apply.

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NEWS

Hoax fire calls drop but still above 3,000 a year

Rain brings down wall



Villager Bob Clarke stands near the collapsed wall on Mill Lane, Kinver

THE wet weather has taken its toll on a wall in Kinver causing it to collapse on to a main route into the village. Safety barricades have now been put up around the landslide spot in Mill Lane.

Piles of rubble still remain at the site and inspectors from Staffordshire County Council have visited to assess the damage.

Temporary traffic lights have also been installed to allow motorists to drive around the bricks. The road

had to be closed for several days before being reopened.

Villager Bob Clarke said the landslide had happened just before Christmas. "It has no doubt been caused by all of the rain we've been having," he said.

He added the closure had left the village cut off as traffic was forced to follow a one and a half-mile detour.

On Christmas Eve there was a landslide at Red Hill, off Brook Road, Stourbridge.

MORE than 3,000 hoax calls were received by West Midlands Fire Service in 12 months, new figures have now revealed.

The service received the calls in the financial year 2011/2012, and although this number is expected to have dropped dramatically in this financial year which runs from April through to March, fire chiefs expect to have received close to 1,000 hoax calls.

In 2011/2012 the service received 3,313 hoax calls, sending engines to 1,128 of the false incidents.

This was only slightly down on the previous year when they received 3,554 hoax calls, and sent engines out 1,457 times. Fire Control staff will actively challenge people if they suspect them of being hoax callers.

The service's sophisticated computer software will also alert staff if a certain phone number or address has been used in a hoax call before.

Sandwell councillor and Fire Authority chairman John Edwards said: "It just gives us a little more information to help us challenge a caller to check to see whether it is a hoax."

"We are bringing the number of hoax calls we go to down, but there are still too many." He added: "I expect the drop in the number of hoax calls is due to education in schools about the danger and seriousness of the calls."

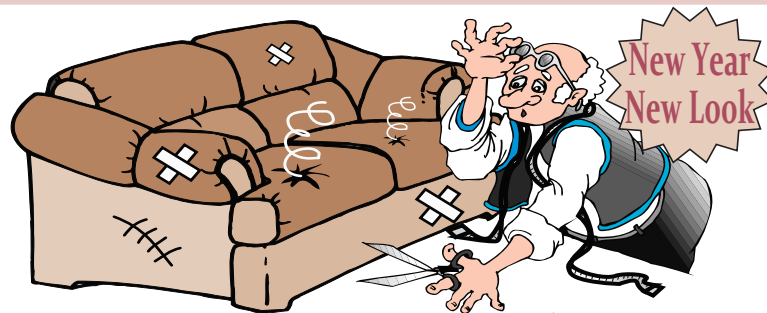
Under a new scheme, fire control staff at the service's headquarters in Birmingham also operate a call challenge system when automatic fire alarms activate, to assess whether there is a need to send a fire engine.

This does not apply to premises where people's lives could be at risk.

Students take plunge

KIDDERMINSTER College students reached new heights during a rock-climbing day at a Bewdley landmark. Twelve abseiled down Blackstone Rock as part of their uniformed public services diploma course.

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NEWS

Purrfect Ann is nominated for charity award

A DEDICATED animal volunteer has been nominated to receive an award for her commitment to the PDSA.

Ann Evans, aged 69, from Codsall, has been shortlisted for the charity's Special Achievement award.

Mrs Evans has spent the last two years giving her time to the charity by helping out in their public relations office, sending out letters and carrying out research.

PDSA's PR manager Deryck Wilson, who nominated retired secretary Ann for the award, said that despite suffering major health issues in the past year she remained dedicated to the charity.

He said: "Ann really does care for the charity and will do her best to spend as much time helping us as she can."



Ann Evans, from Codsall, with rescue cat William

Table top sale to aid funds

A TABLE top sale is due to be held at Codsall Village Hall on Sunday, January 20.

Books, clothes, toys and CD's will be on sale from 12pm and stallholders can arrive at 11am.

Prices for tables start at £6 and admission is 50p for adults. Profits will go to village hall funds. For details phone 01902 843412 or email manager@codsallvillagehall.co.uk

Chance to go on pilgrimage

MEMBERS of a Codsall church are planning a tour of Taizé in France this summer.

A nine-day pilgrimage has been organised by Holy Cross Church on Bilbrook Road and is open to people aged between 15 and 35.

Anyone interested in joining the visit should phone 01902 847069 or for more details email hannah@holycross.bilbrook.info

Honour for stroke victim who turned into a helper

A WOMAN who has battled back after a devastating stroke is now helping other sufferers – and has been honoured with a special certificate. Chris Charles, from Stourton, now volunteers for Dudley Stroke Association.

by Louise Jew

She helps in its Pensnett office, taking on the roles of trustee and committee member and knitting to raise money.

Now she has received a "Life After Stroke" certificate, which was presented to her by ITV's Central Tonight's Bob Warman.

Chris, aged 69, suffered a stroke five years ago, leaving her with mobility problems, short-term memory loss and slurred speech.

Despite suffering two "mini strokes" since, during 2011, she has carried on devoting herself to helping others.

She said: "I feel very humble to have received a certificate. I have been trying to rebuild my life and started volunteering for the Stroke Association to give something back for

the help I've received from the group."

Chris used to be carer to her husband David, who was forced to retire from his job as a Wombourne police officer about 20 years ago after a road accident.

She was among nine West Midlands people who were presented with "Life After Stroke" certificates after being nominated by family and friends.

At the ceremony, Bob Warman said "A stroke can have a devastating impact on people's lives but Chris has truly shown that there is life after stroke. She has shown great courage."

Nominations for the 2013 awards can be made by calling 0207 566 1540 or by sending an email to lasa@stroke.org.uk



Stroke survivor and award-winner Chris Charles with TV presenter Bob Warman

Sleigh pulls in £1,500

STOURBRIDGE and Brierley Hill Round Table's annual Christmas sleigh outings raised nearly £1,500 for charity. The money will be donated to Living Springs, based at Stourton, near Stourbridge, which provides care and support to vulnerable children and their families. Round Table chairman Dan Saunders said: "We are delighted to have raised this amount."

Traditional theme to fundraiser

TETTENHALL & District Round Table is putting on an evening of traditional Scottish dance to raise money for life-limited children.

Kilt-wearing dancers will fill Tettenthall Wood United Reform Church, on Mount Road, for the Céilidh on January 26 at 7.30pm.

In keeping with the traditional Gaelic theme, haggis neeps and tatties will be served up.

Potential

And Birmingham musicians The Burdock Band will be on hand to provide live music.

Richard Unwin, social secretary of Tettenthall & District Round Table, said: "We're looking for potential members to come along but everyone is welcome."

Tickets cost £15. To book, call Richard Unwin on 07889 807367. The money will go to the Round Table Children's Wish charity.

New station for police briefings

TETTENHALL police are to begin holding their morning briefings in Pendeford in an effort to improve efficiency.

The Tettenthall Regis & Wightwick team will be parading with Oxley officers at the Pendeford police station from January 21.

A police spokesperson said the move would not affect patrol numbers and police would return to work as normal after their initial meetings.

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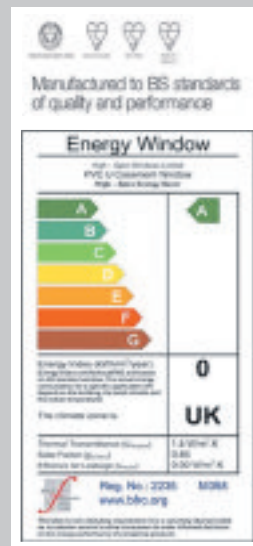
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NEWS

NEWS

in brief

Plans sent in to clear brick site

PLANS to demolish old buildings on the site of a historic former brick-works to make way for 100 new homes, a craft village and nursing home have been lodged.

Work is moving forward on the project after the scheme at Baggeridge was given the go-ahead by the Government last month.

David Wilson Homes and Weinberger were granted outline planning permission by the Planning Inspectorate.

Detailed designs for the site in Gospel End, Sedgley, are also being drawn up and will be submitted to council chiefs in the summer.

A planning application has been submitted to the authority to demolish the buildings.

Group donates cash to charities

A DOG training group in Stourbridge has donated £900 for two charities.

Stourbridge Dog Training Class raised the money over the past year.

The group meets at Wollescote Community Centre, Wassell Road.

The cash went to Friends of the Animals, and Far Forest Dog Rescue.

Helpers needed

Dudley Advocacy is looking to recruit helpers to work with vulnerable adults who have learning disabilities. Information sessions will be held at 10am at Halesowen Library January 10, Sedgley Library January 11, Kingswinford Library January 14.

Pathway may be sealed off to cut down on yob problem

A FOOTPATH which is a "magnet for bad behaviour" could be closed off to stop yobs congregating on steps in Quarry Bank. Residents have long complained about the walkway between Robin Hood Road and Marion Close.

A petition signed by 35 people calling for action was handed in to council chiefs. Councillor Bryan Cotterill said work was under way to gate off the path following a rise in anti-social behaviour. The council is looking to make an order under the Highways Act to shut it. The work is expected to cost £3,500.

Shop worker stole £4,500

A WORKER pocketed £4,500 after deleting items sold from his cash register's records during an 11-month scam at a Halesowen store, a court heard.

Father-of-six Firoz Upadhey, aged 41, began siphoning cash from 99p Stores as he struggled to "keep the household afloat" as his wife only worked 10-hours a week as a dinner lady. Upadhey worked for the budget shop in the Cornbow Shopping Centre.

But officials at the firm's loss prevention department grew increasingly suspicious when they noticed the number of items being deleted from Upadhey's till receipts.

Mr Nigel James, prosecuting, said: "Mr Upadhey denied the allegation but when shown CCTV footage, he admitted he was entering the delete code and keeping the cash difference."

He added Upadhey co-operated with police and admitted taking £4,500 in total between January 1, 2012 and November 2, 2012. Upadhey, of Normandy Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham, pleaded guilty to a charge of theft during a court hearing on Monday. He was given a 12 month community order with 200 hours' unpaid work and ordered to pay back the £4,500 in compensation. Upadhey will also pay £85 court costs and a £60 victim surcharge.

Mr Kally Sahota, defending, said Upadhey is deeply ashamed about this.

The path runs parallel to a private drive to three properties, it is approximately 30 metres long, and two metres wide with steps and has a handrail on one side.

It is often used as a part of a route from the village to the Merry Hill shopping centre.

But police said there had been complaints from neighbours who were being plagued by anti-social behaviour.

The number of problems has "significantly increased" during the past two years, officers say.

Reduction

A report says: "It is strongly believed that if the alleyway was permanently closed there would be a marked reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour as individuals would have no cause or desire to use this area of the estate."

Councillor Cotterill said: "I don't think many people would want to live by these steps."

"They are a magnet for bad behaviour, and the residents have suffered terribly."

"I am very supportive of the footpath being closed off," he added.

"It has also been supported by the police, who want to reduce the anti-social behaviour for the residents."

"There is also a safety issue because the steps lead to a turning point in the road."

Cabinet member for transportation and community safety, Councillor Judy Foster, said councillors are due to make a decision on whether to make a temporary gating order to close the footpath on January 18.

Jobs saved as firm is bought



From left, Brian Hamblin from Chantrey Vellacott DFK with Linecross chairman/financial director David Austin and managing director Stuart Fry

WORKERS of a failing Halesowen manufacturing firm have had their jobs saved thanks to a buy-out by another Midlands company.

Around 48 employees from BI Composites Ltd, Coombs Road, Halesowen were saved after competitor Linecross Ltd bought it for an undisclosed sum.

The future of the company had seemed uncertain after it went into receivership in November last year.

Linecross, which specialises in polyurethane components, is expected to increase its turnover by £8 million next year thanks to the acquisition of the Green Lane Coombs Road site and another plant in Cannock.

Managing Director Stuart Fry said the business has grown steadily since a management buyout in 2003 and the acquisition of BI Composites, which has been renamed Linecross Composites, fits in well with the firm's long-term expansion plans.

"We are delighted to have completed the deal to buy BI Composites and with it safeguard the future of a significant number of jobs," said Fry. Linecross and BI Composites are both innovative and creative companies," he added.

We were let down claim on decision

CAMPAIGNERS in Hagley have spoken of their disappointment after losing their battle to stop plans for the homes - as they vowed to continue to fight the development.

Hagley Parish Council chairman Steve Colella said they would now be considering whether to launch a legal challenge over the decision.

Concerns had been raised by residents who feared the scheme would put pressure on existing services and lead to increased noise and air pollution. Mr Colella said: "There are valid reasons why this application should not have been approved but they've been dismissed."

"The majority of people in Hagley do not want this development but they have been ignored." But he said campaigners would not give up and were now going to consider their options.

"I've been asked by the parish council to consider applying for a judicial review and we will be looking into that over the next couple of days," he added.

Resident Fran Evans, of Kidderminster Road said she felt "angry" and "disappointed" by the decision.

Recycling cards

PEOPLE can recycle their Christmas cards at Sainsbury's stores in Ambleside and Merry Hill until January 15.

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	20.00-21.00	Bokwa
Tuesday	18.00-19.00	Zumba
	19.00-20.00	Circuit
	19.30-21.00	Fitness Yoga
Wednesday	18.00-18.30	Hi/Lo Aerobics
	18.30-19.30	Pump
	19.30-20.30	Pilates
Thursday	17.30-18.15	Family Bokwa
	18.30-19.30	Military Circuit
	19.30-20.30	Zumba
Saturday	9.30-10.15	Zumba Blast
	10.00-11.00	Zumba
Sunday	11.00-12.00	Pilates
	17.00-18.00	Military Circuit

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This is followed by a short drive to Versailles where you can visit the majestic palace home of Louis XIV (admission payable locally) and the typically provincial French market town of Versailles itself.

During the evening the coach will take you on a tour of Paris 'By Night'. The whole city is a work of art with monuments and buildings illuminated with the majestic Eiffel Tower dominating the skyline.

The next morning a visit is made to one of the most picturesque and atmospheric quarters of Paris, Montmartre, home of the artists and street entertainers, with of course the whole area dominated by the white domed basilica of the Sacre-Coeur.

There will also be free time in the city. Perhaps take a trip up the Eiffel Tower, a cruise on the River Seine, a browse amongst the antique shops, a wander around the picturesque gardens or take your time to visit Paris' incredible range of attractions.

INFO

- Return standard class seat on Eurostar
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★ **PRICE FROM £239**

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Four days departing April 5

★ **PRICE FROM £319**

- Return coach and ferry travel
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Two days departing April 6

★ **PRICE FROM £125**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Entrance to the Steeplechase enclosure (upgrade to Tattersalls enclosure offered)
- Visit to Chester
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Six days various departure dates

★ **PRICE FROM £829**

- Return flights
- Two nights bed and breakfast accommodation in both Moscow and St Petersburg
- Overnight sleeper train from Moscow to St Petersburg
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- Services of a tour manager
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Easter break Walking on the Gower and Pembrokeshire Coast

Four days departing March 29

★ **PRICE FROM £255**

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
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Two days departing March 16

★ **PRICE FROM £99.⁹⁵**

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What's On! Halesowen

Delightful visit to the Gruffalo

The Gruffalo's Child, Birmingham Town Hall
JULIA Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's best-selling children's book has been re-imagined for the stage in this delightful production by the Tall Stories theatre company.

Using large parts of the tale's phenomenally successful predecessor *The Gruffalo* to flesh out the action to 50 minutes, the show has it all for little ones – songs, dance, audience participation, laughs and a scare or two.

The cast of three perform imaginatively to transform the simple set into the 'deep dark wood' and all the characters are given a humorous twist particularly the snake, owl and fox. It is a super piece of children's theatre which had my three-year-old literally on the edge of his seat.

Runs until January 16.

David Briggs

Jeeves is coming to church hall show

PG Wodehouse's *Come on, Jeeves* is a Dudley theatre group's latest production.

The comedy will be performed by Wordsley Amateur Dramatic Society from January 23 to 26.

The shows will be directed by Andrew Wood and will see the inimitable Jeeves glide into action.

Performances will be staged at Kingswinford Methodist Church Hall in Stream Road.

Tickets cost £7 and £6 for concessions, call 01384 273026.

Dancing with vampires and a magical blue genie

EARLY 2013 is filled with dance delights for fans of fancy footwork with acclaimed choreographer **Matthew Bourne** bringing his latest gothic work to Birmingham and the city's own ballet company presenting a UK premiere.

by Leon Burakowski

Strictly Come Dancing champion and Olympic gymnast **Louis Smith** will lead the line-up of dancing celebs and professionals when *Strictly Come Dancing Live* comes to Birmingham NIA from Friday to Sunday, January 18 to 20.

The classical dance calendar begins on January 26 at Birmingham Symphony Hall when **Deborah Bull** competes an Evening of Music and Dance with Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Beauty

It will include a preview of **David Bintley's** new ballet *Aladdin* plus the Royal Ballet Sinfonia performing Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*.

The male dance divas of *Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo* squeeze into satin pointe-shoes to entertain at Birmingham Hippodrome on February 1 and 2.

Matthew Bourne's acclaimed *Sadler's Wells* production of *Sleeping Beauty* –

with dancing vampires – is at the Hippodrome from February 5 to 9.

More than four years since its world premiere in Japan, Birmingham Royal Ballet director **David Bintley** at last brings his new ballet *Aladdin* to the UK and to the company's home theatre, Birmingham Hippodrome, for 12 performances from February 15.

The creator of hit ballets *Hobson's Choice*, *Take Five* and *Cinderella* has created choreography for music composed by **Carl Davis**. The production promises lavish production values and an incredible blue genie.

The Russian Royal Ballet of Siberia return to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next month. They will perform *The Nutcracker* on the afternoon of Sunday, February 17, *Coppelia* on February 18 evening, and matinee and evening performances of *Swan Lake* on February 19.



Choreographer **Matthew Bourne** presents a radical revamp of *Sleeping Beauty* next month. Photo by **Simon Annand**

Bloody tale of a guilty Tsar

Boris Godunov, RSC Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

OUTGOING artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company **Michael Boyd** bids farewell to Stratford with this gripping, seldom-seen Russian classic which is better known as a famous opera.

Adrian Mitchell's adaptation – his last before his death in 2008 – delivers clarity and pace in **Alexander Pushkin's** tale of a bloody and guilty tsar and the young pretender to his imperial throne, set in the Russia of 400 years ago.

Lloyd Hutchinson is powerful as a thick-set, Ulster-accented Tsar Boris, whilst **Gethin Anthony** (from TV's *Game Of Thrones*) is mercurial as the young monk who leads a rebellion by posing as the true heir, who Boris secretly had murdered years before.

Most impressive of all is **Lucy Briggs-Owen** as a scheming power-hungry Polish princess.

A stark set, with coat hangers for costumes from various historic eras, is the arena for intensely physical performances.

Director **Boyd** brings out Pushkin's debt to Shakespeare tragedies and parallels with the modern Russia of President **Putin** in this two-hour production, fast-paced without an interval.

Boris Godunov continues in repertoire at the Swan until March 30.

Leon Burakowski

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World Without End

Channel 4, 9pm

In theory, Miranda was the most low-maintenance of the Sex and the City quartet, but it may still come as a bit of a shock to see actress Cynthia Nixon removed from New York and plunked down in medieval England in this epic sequel to The Pillars of the Earth. In theory, the conflict is now over, but that doesn't mean peace has been restored for the people of Kingsbridge. Caris (Charlotte Riley) is working to free her father, who has been accused of being a traitor – although it seems her aunt Petranilla (Nixon) has her own reasons for wanting his release.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Good Cook. (R) **12.00** BBC News: Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Brazil: Welcoming the World. (R) **1.30** Bargain Hunt. **2.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** BBC News: Regional News; Weather. **5.30** Animal Antics. **6.00** Richard Hammond's Secret Service. The hidden-camera show features a trend-setting young lad who is fooled into thinking he is the next big thing in modern art and a single man experiences a demanding blind date. **6.45** Britain's Brightest. Clare Balding hosts the intelligence-based game show, with six more contestants intent on proving they have the brain power to be crowned Britain's Brightest. **8.00** The National Lottery: In It to Win It. Dale Winton presents the quiz in which five contestants pit their wits to scoop a big cash prize. **8.50** Casualty. Nick Jordan rushes Yvonne into the ED, but Zoe believes he is refusing to accept the severity of her condition. Robyn discovers Aoife's boyfriend is not as perfect as he seems. **9.40** Mrs Brown's Boys. Cathy goes to extreme lengths to impress her boyfriend. (R) **10.10** BBC News; Weather. **10.30** Match of the Day. Including Everton v Swansea City. National Lottery Update. **11.50** The Football League Show. Highlights of today's games. **1.05** Weatherview. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: The Hitch-Hiker. (1953) **7.15** Film: On Dangerous Ground. (1951) **8.35** Film: Armored Car Robbery. (1950) **9.40** The Sky at Night. (R) **10.00** A History of Britain by Simon Schama. (R) **11.00** Meet the Ancestors. (R) **11.30** Map Man. **12.00** Indian Food Made Easy. (R) **12.30** Talking Pictures. (R) **1.15** Film: Scott of the Antarctic. (1948) **3.00** Coast. (R) **4.00** Stargazing Live. (R) **5.00** Stargazing Live. (R) **6.00** Stargazing Live. Brian Cox and Dara Ó Briain discuss meteors, comets and asteroids, and Liz Bonnin meets the Nasa team tracking space objects on a collision course with Earth. Last in the series. (R) **7.00** Flig It! Paul Martin visits Stoke-on-Trent, where he meets people eager to sell their antiques at auction. (R) **8.00** Dad's Army. American troops arrive in Walmington-on-Sea. (R) **8.30** Fawcett Towers. Sybil walks out on Basil. (R) **9.00** QI XL. Stephen Fry hosts an extended version of the quiz with a difference, with Julia Zemiro, Tim Vine, Rob Brydon and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of jolly. (R) **9.45** Film: Oranges and Sunshine. (2010) Premiere. A social worker discovers thousands of British children have been sent to care homes in Australia and suffered abuse. Fact-based drama, with Emily Watson. **11.25** Arts: BDO World Championships. Both men's semi-finals and the women's final. **12.15** Film: Sugarhouse. (2007)

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Handy Manny. **6.05** Handy Manny. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.15** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.30** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **8.05** Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.30** Victorious. (R) **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **11.20** Saturday Cookbook. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Film: Columbo: Suitable for Framing. (1971) **1.55** My Tasty Travels with Lynda Bellingham. (R) **2.55** Film: Hulk. (2003) Adventure, starring Eric Bana. **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather. **6.00** New You've Been Framed: The Next Generation. A round-up of the best clips featuring children. **7.00** Splash! Another five celebrities – Joey Essex, Caprice, Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards, Diarmuid Gavin and Charlotte Jackson – compete for two places in the semi-final of the diving contest. **8.30** Take Me Out. A firefighter, a sales assistant, a comic-book collector and a student enter the love lift in the hope of impressing 30 single women. Paddy McGuinness presents. **9.45** The Jonathan Ross Show. With Jamie Foxx, Jerry Hall and Micky Flanagan. **10.45** ITV News; Weather. **11.00** Film: Beowulf. (2007) Motion-capture animated fantasy, starring Ray Winstone. **1.05** The Store. **2.20** In Plain Sight. (R) **3.05** Pushing Daisies. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Sali Mali. (R) **6.10** The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Beach Volleyball. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** Undercover Boss USA. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.00** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **4.25** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **5.00** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **5.30** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **6.00** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. Bulgarian surf instructor Dimitar Dosev hosts the final party in Sligo, preparing an ambitious menu that includes barbecued lobster. **6.30** Channel 4 News. **6.55** 4thought.tv. Public confidence in religious leaders. **7.00** Film: Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian. (2009) Nightwatchman Larry and his living museum exhibit friends must stop a reanimated pharaoh from taking over the world. Fantasy comedy sequel, starring Ben Stiller and Amy Adams. **9.00** World Without End. New series. A knight involved in a plot to kill Edward I finds sanctuary in the village of Kingsbridge. Historical drama, starring Cynthia Nixon, Peter Firth and Ben Chaplin. **10.55** Film: The 51st State. (2001) Action comedy, starring Samuel L. Jackson. **12.45** Film: Pan's Labyrinth. (2006) **2.45** Hollyoaks. **4.50** Smallville. (R) **5.30** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. **10.35** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. **11.10** Inside Hollywood. (R) **11.20** Celebrity Big Brother: Eviction. (R) **12.15** The Gadget Show. (R) **1.20** Film: Brave Warrior. (1952) **2.50** Film: Mutiny on the Bounty. (1962) **6.10** Film: Attack on the Iron Coast. (1968) Commandos undertake a mission to disable a German navy base – but complications arise. Second World War drama, starring Lloyd Bridges. **7.50** 5 News Weekend. **7.55** NCIS. Gibbs receives a call from his old friend Senator Patrick Kelly, who claims he is being framed for the murder of a naval commander – but the evidence quickly piles up against him. (R) **8.50** NCIS. A marine is found tortured to death in his garage. (R) **9.45** Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the famous housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they try to get used to living alongside one another. **10.45** 50 Shocking Facts About Diet and Exercise. Countdown of methods adopted to lose weight. (R) **11.45** Comedy Kings: Best of Just for Laughs. With Noel Fielding, Flight of the Conchords and Dylan Moran. (R) **12.15** SuperCasino. **3.55** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.20** Great Artists. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Great Movie Mistakes 2: The Sequel. **7.10** Merlin. **7.55** Doctor Who. **8.40** Top Gear. **9.40** Film: Armageddon (1998) A drilling team transports a nuclear device into outer space to destroy an asteroid on a collision course with Earth. Sci-fi thriller, with Bruce Willis, Ben Affleck and Liv Ullmann. **BBC Four** **7.00** Lost Land of the Tiger. **8.00** A History of Art in Three Colours. **9.00** Borgen. **11.00** Pop Charts Britannia: 60 Years of the Top 10. **ITV2** **3.30** You've Been Framed! **6.00** Film: King Kong (2005) **9.45** Take Me Out – The Gossip. **10.30** Fake Reaction. **11.15** Film: I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry (2007) **ITV3** **2.40** A Touch of Frost. **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple. **7.00** Doc Martin. **8.00** Midsomer Murders. **11.05** Film: Rain Man (1988) **ITV4** **3.40** Film: The Sea Shall Not Have Them (1955) **5.40** Film: The Last Sunset (1961) **8.00** The Sweeney. **9.00** Film: The Keeper (2008) **11.05** Film: Child's Play 3 (1991) **E4** **3.30** Rules of Engagement. **6.00** The Big Bang Theory. **7.00** Happy Endings. **8.00** How I Met Your Mother. **8.30** 2 Broke Girls. **9.00** Film: Snakes on a Plane (2006) **11.05** The Big Bang Theory. **Film4** **3.05** Carry On Spying (1964) **4.50** Anastasia (1997) **6.40** A Good Year (2006) Comedy drama, starring Russell Crowe. **9.00** Double Jeopardy (1999) Thriller, starring Ashley Judd. **11.05** Silent Hill (2006) Horror, starring Radha Mitchell and Sean Bean.

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 13.01.13

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CHOICE



Timothy Spall

Blandings

BBC1, 6.30pm
Period costumes, an all-star cast and PG Wodehouse – with the possible exception of pensioners going down hill in tin baths, what more could you ask for in a new BBC Sunday evening comedy series? If you're unfamiliar with the Blandings stories, they centre around the perpetually befuddled Lord Emsworth (Timothy Spall), known to his friends as Clarence, who longs for a quiet life dedicated to his beloved pig The Empress. However, when he's surrounded by a dysfunctional family, peace is rather hard to come by.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast, 7.40 Match of the Day, (R) 9.00 The Big Questions, 11.00 Sunday Politics: Weather for the Week Ahead, 12.25 Countryfile, (R) 1.25 Bargain Hunt, 2.25 Escape to the Country, (R) 3.25 Chatsworth, (R) 4.25 Songs of Praise, 5.00 Africa, (R)

6.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

6.30 Blandings. New series. Period comedy, starring Timothy Spall.

7.00 Countryfile. Hertfordshire is the destination for this week's show, as Julia Bradbury learns about a shrimp habitat and Matt Baker meets the dogs playing for the county's finest flyball teams.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Items under scrutiny at Cawdor Castle near Inverness include the best bargain-buy dolls ever seen on the show and an 18th-century travelling chest with royal connections. Red button viewers can play along by guessing the valuations.

9.00 Ripper Street. A sudden cholera outbreak causes Reid and the team to suspect deliberate contamination, so they scour Whitechapel for clues and connections as the laboratory fills with bodies.

10.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2. Including Manchester United v Liverpool.

11.25 Room 101 – Extra Storage. With Terry Wogan, Phil Tufnell and Victoria Coren.

12.05 The Celebrity Apprentice USA, 1.30 Weather, 1.35 BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Film: I Remember Mama. (1948) **8.15 Life in a Cottage Garden** with Carol Klein. (R) **8.45 A to Z of TV Gardening, 9.30 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites, 11.00 EastEnders, (R) 12.55 Live Snooker: The Masters, 5.00 Ski Sunday, 5.45 Live Darts: BDO World Championships.**

8.00 The Battle for Malta. Historian James Holland analyses the Second World War battle for the strategically important Mediterranean island, which was under siege by Axis forces for more than two years. (R)

9.00 Tankies: Tank Heroes of WWII. Mark Urban concludes his examination of the exploits of six members of the 5th Royal Tank Regiment, telling their story from D-Day to the end of the war.

10.00 Speed Dreams: The Fastest Place on Earth. After all the preparations back in the UK, the men finally test their custom-built machines in a week of racing on Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats. Bill Nighy narrates.

11.00 Snooker: The Masters. Mark Allen v Mark Davis. Action from this evening's first-round tie at Alexandra Palace, where Davis was looking to build on his impressive showing at last month's UK Championship.

11.50 Snooker Extra. Neil Robertson v Ding Junhui. Hazel Irvine presents extended highlights of the opening first-round match of the Masters at Alexandra Palace.

1.50 Sign Zone: Holby City, (R) 2.50 Who Do You Think You Are? (R)

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Handy Manny, **6.05 Handy Manny, 6.25 The Hive, (R) 6.35 The Hive, (R) 6.40 Dino Dan, (R) 6.55 Dino Dan, 7.05 Almost Naked Animals, (R) 7.15 Almost Naked Animals, (R) 7.30 Almost Naked Animals, 7.40 Matt Hatter Chronicles, (R) 8.05 Rated A for Awesome, 8.15 Rated A for Awesome, 8.30 Big Time Rush, 9.00 The Aquabats Super Show, 9.25 ITV News, 9.30 There's No Taste Like Home, (R) 10.25 Dinner Date, (R) 11.25 May the Best House Win, (R) 12.25 Dickinson's Real Deal, (R) 1.25 Rosemary & Thyme, (R) 2.25 ITV News; Weather, 2.30 Film: Sparkling Cyanide, (1983) **4.30 All Star Family Fortunes, (R) 5.15 You've Been Framed! (R) 5.45 Regional Programme, Weather.****

6.00 ITV News: Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice. The celebrities who did not perform last week take their chance to impress the public and the judges.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With choreographer Louie Spence and radio presenter Richard Bacon.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. The two lowest-scoring couples compete.

9.00 Mr Selfridge. Following a slow opening, Harry tries to draw in the crowds by arranging to exhibit the plane of pioneering aviator Louis Blériot inside the store.

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather.

10.15 Film: The Constant Gardener. (2005) Political thriller, with Ralph Fiennes and Rachel Weisz.

12.30 The Store, 2.30 Monk, (R) 3.20 Pushing Daisies, (R) 4.05 ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The Hoobs, (R) 6.40 The Hoobs, (R) 7.05 Will & Grace, (R) 7.30 Everybody Loves Raymond, (R) 7.55 Everybody Loves Raymond, (R) 8.25 Frasier, (R) 8.55 Frasier, (R) 9.30 Sunday Brunch, 12.05 The Big Bang Theory, (R) 12.40 The Big Bang Theory, (R) 1.10 The Big Bang Theory, (R) 1.40 The Simpsons, (R) 2.10 The Simpsons, (R) 2.40 Film: Honey, I Blew Up the Kid, (1992) **4.25 Deal or No Deal, 5.25 Time Team.**

6.25 Channel 4 News.

6.55 4thought.tv. Public confidence in religious leaders.

7.00 Come Dine with Me. Beautician Amanda Bradley, author and businessman Heath Samples, accident-prone Fran Atkin and technician Phil Laycock from North Yorkshire take up the dinner party challenge.

8.00 The Hotel. Manager Mark continues to try to attract more upmarket guests to the Grosvenor and makes plans to launch a new five-star breakfast, with a gourmet sausage as the main attraction.

9.00 Film: Unknown. (2011) Premiere. A doctor wakes from a coma to find another man is claiming to be him, and any evidence of his real identity has disappeared.

11.15 Film: Beverly Hills Cop. (1984) Comedy thriller, starring Eddie Murphy, Judge Reinhold, Ronny Cox and Steven Berkoff.

1.15 Film: Four Brothers. (2005) **3.05 Smallville, (R) 3.45 St. Elsewhere, (R) 4.30 Deal or No Deal, (R) 5.25 Countdown, (R)**

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig, **6.05 Roary the Racing Car, (R) 6.15 Fifi and the Floortots, (R) 6.25 Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures, (R) 6.30 The Mr Men Show, (R) 6.45 Olive the Ostrich, (R) 6.50 Abby's Flying Fairy School, (R) 7.00 Roobarb and Custard Too, (R) 7.10 Bananas in Pyjamas, (R) 7.20 Animal Antics, (R) 7.30 Make Way for Noddy, (R) 7.40 City of Friends, (R) 7.55 Little Princess, (R) 8.05 Mio Mao, (R) 8.10 The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky, (R) 8.25 Angelina Ballerina, (R) 8.40 Castle Farm, (R) 8.45 Rupert Bear, (R) 9.00 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom, (R) 9.15 Toby's Travelling Circus, (R) 9.30 Roary the Racing Car, (R) 9.45 Jelly Jam, 10.00 Power Rangers: Super Samurai, 10.35 Batman: The Brave and the Bold, 11.10 Meerkat Manor, (R) 11.40 Celebrity Big Brother, (R) 12.40 Once Upon a Time, (R) 1.40 Film: Little Man, (2006) **3.25 Film: Mannequin, (1987) 5.10 Film: Loch Ness, (1996)****

6.55 5 News Weekend.

7.00 Film: Bulletproof Monk. (2003) A mysterious Tibetan monk battles modern-day Nazis while training a thief to be his replacement. Thriller, starring Chow Yun-Fat.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The ups and downs of BB life.

10.00 Film: Over Her Dead Body. (2008) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Eva Longoria and Paul Rudd.

11.55 Bizarre Burials. Unusual and memorable ways in which deaths are marked. (R)

12.55 SuperCasino, 3.55 House Doctor, (R) 4.20 HouseBusters, (R) 4.45 Rough Guide To, (R) 5.00 Hana's Helpline, (R) 5.15 The Milkshake! Show, (R) 5.35 Thomas & Friends, (R) 5.50 Roary the Racing Car, (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Growing Up Poor 8.00 Film: Up (2009) 9.30 World's Craziest Fools 10.00 Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents 11.00 Family Guy 11.45 American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 The Sky at Night 8.00 The Sky at Night Special: Exploring Mars 8.30 Sir Patrick Moore: Astronomer, Broadcaster and Eccentric 9.00 Sir Patrick Moore: Talks to Mark Lawson 10.00 Film: Leaving (2009) 11.20 Dame Shirley Bassey at the BBC

ITV2
3.15 Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) 5.00 Take Me Out 6.15 Take Me Out – The Gossip 7.00 Film: Uncle Buck (1989) 9.00 The Magul Weekend 10.00 Film: 2 Fast 2 Furious (2003)

ITV3
3.40 Lewis 5.40 Murder, She Wrote 6.45 Agatha Christie's Poirot 9.00 The Best of the Royal Variety 10.00 Lewis

ITV4
3.40 Film: The Appaloosa (1966) 5.45 Film: The Secret War of Harry Frigg (1967) 8.00 Minder 9.00 Film: The Jerk (1979) Comedy, with Steve Martin, 11.00 Film: Sweeney! (1977)

E4
3.45 Revenge 4.45 Film: Cheaper by the Dozen 2 (2005) 6.40 Film: The Day After Tomorrow (2004) 9.05 The Big Bang Theory 10.00 The New Normal 10.30 2 Broke Girls 11.00 Rude Tube: Welcome to 2013

Film4
2.50 Only You (1994) 5.00 Robots (2005) 6.45 The Women (2008) 9.00 The Ugly Truth (2009)

Romantic comedy, starring Gerard Butler and Katherine Heigl, **10.55 Carlos – Part One (2010)**

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

Jane Doe: The Wrong Face, Channel 5, 3.15pm
The former government agent is called back into action after kidnappers abduct a district attorney's wife during plastic surgery – meaning nobody knows what the victim now looks like. The criminals demand the release of the defendant in a money-laundering trial, but the accused denies all knowledge of the crime. Thriller, starring Lea Thompson, Joe Penny and Jessy Schram. (2005)

TUESDAY

Flightplan, BBC1, 11.05pm
A widow boards a plane with her daughter and promptly falls asleep. When she wakes up, the girl has disappeared – and the mother's fear turns to outright panic when the aircraft crew insists she boarded the flight alone, suggesting the child is merely a figment of her distressed imagination. Thriller, starring Jodie Foster, Peter Sarsgaard, Sean Bean and Greta Scacchi. (2005)



Tropic Thunder, Friday, BBC1, 11.20pm

WEDNESDAY

When a Man Loves a Woman, BBC1, 11.40pm
A couple's outwardly idyllic marriage is close to disintegrating through the wife's alcoholism, prompting her husband to resort to desperate measures to make her give up drinking for their children's sake. However, he is also forced to face up to the part he played in allowing her life to go off the rails. Drama, with Andy Garcia, Meg Ryan, Lauren Tom, Ellen Burstyn, Tina Majorino and Mae Whitman. (1994)

THURSDAY

Lover Come Back, Channel 4, 12.35pm
Advertising executive Carol Templeton is determined to best her competitor Jerry Webster at every opportunity. When an important campaign comes up, she sets out to beat him to it and clinch the deal at any price. Unfortunately for her, she fails to realise the whole thing is a set-up devised by her hated rival. Romantic comedy, starring Doris Day, Rock Hudson, Tony Randall, Edie Adams and Jack Oakie. (1961)

FRIDAY

Tropic Thunder, BBC1, 11.20pm
A director's epic Vietnam picture is behind schedule and over budget. Taking the advice of the grizzled war veteran on whose life the film is based, he drops the actors into a jungle with the intention of filming them fighting guerrilla-style – but the cast is unaware the surrounding warfare is genuine. Comedy, directed by and starring Ben Stiller, with Jack Black, Steve Coogan and, in an Oscar-nominated role, Robert Downey Jr. (2008)

Pick of the Week

Caught in a net of lies, intrigue and danger

Alexandra Roach may only be a mere 25 years old, but by telling her impressive CV that – it clearly knows no bounds as she picks winning script after winning script.

She first came to prominence in last year's *The Iron Lady* as a young Margaret Thatcher, but as her star continues on in its ascent, the actress appears here in Dennis Kelly's fantastic thriller.

However, she's not the only talent to be found, what with the cast list reading like a who's-who of recognisable UK talent.

Roach plays Becky, one of a group of five people who have bonded through an online forum and agree to meet after gaining possession of the original manuscript for fabled graphic novel *The Utopia Experiments*. But they're not the only ones who are in the know about the manuscript: a shadowy organization known as *The Network* is hot on their trail and will go to any lengths to get hold of it, and it's not long before one of the forum members is killed.

The murder is witnessed by fellow member 11-year-old Grant (Oliver Woolford), who quickly flees with the manuscript, while Becky and Ian (Nathan Stewart-Jarrett) realise they've been set up for crimes they didn't commit, and the final member Wilson (Adel Akhtar) attracts the attention of Network henchmen Arby (Neil Maskill) and Lee (Paul Ready).

This is a group of people who now have a lot more on their plate than a bit of light reading...

If it sounds complicated, that's probably because it is, but that won't stop this thriller assuring that Channel 4 has a fantastic start to 2013.

But, as one of the stars of the show, what does Ms Roach think makes it so gripping?

"Dennis Kelly's writing [is] brilliant," she explains. "I also think he writes for women so well. All the female characters in this are very strong and feisty and full of personality. As soon as I read Becky, I could see her in my brain, and I could see how she was

going to say her lines. I got really excited, which is really scary as an actor, because you haven't been offered the part.

"I cancelled a holiday and everything just because I wanted this so much. I was so thrilled when I actually got it."

And of the programme's brutality, she explains: "I found it exhausting to film, because being on the run from halfway through episode one onwards was a lot. We were filming in Liverpool for four months, and every day was really full."

"The stakes are always really high for the group, there are no scenes where you can really relax and take a back seat. It takes a lot out of you, filming for four months like that. You've got to have so much energy; you can't go on the back foot."

So that's our January sorted then, and thank goodness it doesn't require anything more from us than curling up on the sofa and indulging in some top-notch viewing.



Alexandra Roach heads the cast of *Utopia*, Tuesday, Channel 4, 10pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY

Wintertwatch 2013
BBC2, 8.30pm

Everyone's favourite naturalists Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan and Martin Hughes-Games are back in the Highlands of Scotland for this new series charting the changing of the seasons. It's been a decidedly soggy winter so far this year, and it follows one of the wettest years on record – so it will be interesting to see how the nation's fauna and flora are coping with the sustained deluge. The trio are presenting from their base at the Aigas Field Centre, but they hear from reports around the country, as they follow the fortunes of beavers, red squirrels, pine martens and a host of other animals to see how they fare with the various challenges this season has to offer.

Mrs Brown's Boys
BBC1, 9.30pm

We could describe this sitcom as a Marmite of television comedy – viewers either love or hate it. The same could be said of Miranda; oddly, the great viewing figures both shows received on New Year's Day helped BBC1 win the bank holiday ratings battle against ITV1. Whether the series can maintain that momentum is anybody's guess, but seeing as the laughs come thick and fast in each episode, there's no reason why it shouldn't. This week, Agnes is in a great mood because she's celebrating her anniversary – the only way things could be better is if Dr Flynn organised some respite care for Grandad so she could go away on holiday for a couple of weeks. Luckily, she has a cunning plan up her sleeve.

TUESDAY

The Sarah Milligan Television Programme
BBC2, 8.30pm

South Shields comic Sarah Milligan has had quite the whirlwind career, from winning the if.comedy Award in Edinburgh for Best Newcomer in 2008 to releasing a record-breaking DVD in 2011. She's now earned her place very much in the mainstream of modern comedy, and her observational style lends itself perfectly to this series, which focuses on her opinions on the current crop of small-screen offerings. The first series proved hilarious viewing, so we're glad she's back to guide us through the latest batch of shows that this new season brings. She's joined on the first show by Strictly Come Dancing judge Craig Revel Horwood and former Spice Girl Melanie C, and intersperses her interviews with stand-up monologues that pull no punches.

WEDNESDAY

Gok's Style Secrets
Channel 4, 8pm

Mr Wan rushes to the aid of 53-year-old mother Naseem, who is not only single, but almost two decades single! Since spitting with the father of her son, the former aerobics teacher from Essex has thrown all her energy into raising now 19-year-old Casey, unfortunately letting her style and confidence slip at the same time. It's the perfect time for a complete overhaul though, as Casey's

preparing to fly the nest, so Gok is on hand with some top-notch flirting and fashion tips. And there are no excuses now Naseem, after all, you live in the glitz capital of the UK (although we hope you will stop short of a vajazzle!).

Funny Business

BBC2, 9pm

We all know comedy can be a lucrative business, and many comics generate pots of cash via the corporate world, whether it's making after-dinner speeches or appearing in TV commercials. This documentary narrated by

Eddie Mair reveals more about this money-spinning world and reveals what happened when a British stand-up decided to set up a company trading on laughs. While some comics might be just in it for the money, others such as Rhod Gilbert ended up making a fortune by accident: "Making people laugh is something I've always loved doing, but doing it for a living or doing it on a stage in some kind of formal environment was never part of my plan," he explains. Among the other contributors are Barry Cryer, John Cleese, Jo Brand, Arthur Smith and Clive Anderson.



American Idol, Friday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY

Inside Death Row with Trevor McDonald
ITV1, 9pm

At first glance, it looks as if poor old Sir Trev has got himself in an awful lot of trouble and is currently languishing in a US jail somewhere. But don't worry, dear readers – he's safe and sound and is merely fronting this two-part documentary in which he meets the 12 prisoners who are currently on death row at Indiana State Maximum Security Prison. The institution itself isn't a pleasant place to be (as you would expect), but to be there and know you will die without ever being free again – and knowing exactly when you will be killed – is an almost unimaginable situation. Expect some incredible stories from the dozen on death row, as well as those serving life sentences for various violent crimes.

FRIDAY

American Idol
Channel 5, 10pm

Talent shows, as we all know, are no guarantee of success. One of the biggest tragedies of this show is that David Cook, winner of the 2008 American Idol contest, never made a ripple on this side of the Pond, despite releasing a couple of the best albums of recent years. Niggles aside, there are still plenty of goodies to enjoy with this new run of the enduring 'search for a music star' show, including a new judging line-up that sees Mariah Carey, Nicki Minaj and Keith Urban joining old-hand Randy Jackson. The series starts on Thursday, January 17 on 5* with a two-hour special, then Channel 5 join 5* for this second audition show.

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A very nice and welcoming home, this 3 bed house features a spacious lounge with separate dining room, modern kitchen with a freezer, downstairs wc, house bathroom and shower, driveway and well kept gardens to front and rear.

£595 PCM



HALESOWEN, WASSELL ROAD

A Beautifully Presented Three Bedroom Semi Detached House Being Much Improved By The Present Vendor Having Accommodation Including Open Plan Kitchen/Diner, Attractive Lounge, Three Generous Bedrooms, Refitted Shower Room, Separate W.C., Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Block Paved Driveway And Rear Gardens.

£575 PCM



HALESOWEN, PEACHLEY CLOSE

Undergone a complete refurbishment with a brand new kitchen, brand new bathroom, new decoration, this detached bungalow which is centrally located to Halesowen and within walking distance to shops and bus routes to Stourbridge and Birmingham featuring 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, driveway parking. A rare opportunity to rent a bungalow which is not to be missed.

£550 PCM



HALESOWEN, CLENT VIEW ROAD

Excellent value for money. An exceptionally spacious home in a very popular location close to local shops and bus routes to Merry Hill, Halesowen and Stourbridge. Close to Colley Lane Primary School, briefly comprising of: Three Double Bedrooms, Through Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, House Bathroom, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Front and Rear Gardens, Unfurnished.

£550 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, PRINCE STREET

Currently undergoing a re-decoration, is this semi detached house briefly comprising four bedrooms (two double, two single), spacious lounge, in progress of having a new kitchen, downstairs w.c., bathroom with double shower cubicle. Benefits include gas central heating, double glazing, driveway parking, low maintenance rear garden.

£545 PCM



CRADLEY HEATH, LUANNE CLOSE

Situated in this popular residential area, is this top floor apartment, which overlooks the canal and has its own balcony, comprising of: two bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, access to balcony from the master bedroom, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking. Well worth an inspection

£525 PCM



HALESOWEN, FAIRMILE ROAD

Situated in popular residential area of Halesowen, with easy access to buses to the town, is this modern furnished first floor apartment comprising of: two bedrooms, lounge, and fitted kitchen, bathroom with a shower, gas central heating, double glazing, garage parking, and communal gardens

£525 PCM



STOURBRIDGE, PROSPECT GARDENS

Located Close To Stourbridge Town Centre And Stourbridge Junction Train Centre, Is This Unfurnished Newly Decorated Mid Terraced House, Comprising Of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen With Dining Area, Cosy Lounge, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Bathroom with Shower, Small Rear Garden, Parking Space To Front

£525 PCM



STOURBRIDGE, HUNGRY HILL

Situated in a popular residential area of Stourbridge, within a few minutes walk of Stourbridge Junction Train Station, the property features a large bedroom to the front and 2 single bedrooms, spacious lounge to the front, large kitchen, house bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway to the front. Available immediately

£495 PCM



NETHERTON, ROUND STREET

Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached home, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, one double bedroom and one single bedroom, house bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars, unfurnished

£475 PCM



BRIERLEY HILL, FOXDALE DRIVE

Been Freshly Redecorated And Within A 5 Minutes Drive Of Brierley Hill Town Centre And Few Minutes More From Merry Hill Shopping Centre, Is This Unfurnished End Terraced House, Comprising Of: Two Bedrooms, 1 With Fitted Wardrobes, House Bathroom With Shower, Nice Sized Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, On Road Parking, No Garden

£475 PCM



ROWLEY REGIS, WINCHESTER CLOSE

A very well presented, unfurnished first floor apartment, close to the M5 J2, briefly comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, Double Glazing, Bathroom with Shower, Parking Space and Parking Area for Visitors, Communal gardens

£425 PCM



HALESOWEN, APPERLEY WAY

A spacious Part Furnished first floor apartment on the ever popular Homer Hill estate, briefly comprising of: One Double Bedroom, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, Unfurnished. Available Immediately. Highly Recommended.

£400 PCM



OLDBURY, CAUSEWAY GREEN ROAD

This large, split level flat above shops, within walking distance to bus links and close to J2 of the M5, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Spacious Living Room, Fitted Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Parking to Rear, Unfurnished

£400 PCM



HALESOWEN, PIPPIN AVENUE

Located on this popular development of Homer Hill, Located close to Cradley Heath train station, bus route to Halesowen and Merry Hill, Comprising of: One Double Bedroom, Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen, House Bathroom with Shower. A property not to be missed

£395 PCM



HALESOWEN, NETHEREND LANE

Available Is This Unfurnished Ground Floor Apartment Which Is Well Presented Throughout, Within Walking Distance To Cradley Heath Train Station, Comprising Of: Modern Fitted Kitchen, Lounge/Dining Room, Bathroom With Shower, One Bedroom With Built In Wardrobes, En Block Garage.

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Top guide for Dudley, Halesowen, Sedgley, Kidderminster and Stourbridge

Ideal family house has a flexible layout



This link-detached in Buckingham Grove, Kingswinford, is priced at £219,950

A DISTINCTIVE and deceptive modern family home just a short walk from the heart of Kingswinford is for sale priced at £219,950.

The property in Buckingham Grove is described by agents as surprisingly spacious and successfully extended, and that it needs a full inspection for the flexible three/four bedroom layout to be appreciated.

On the ground floor is a guest cloak/WC with low level toilet and wall-mounted washbasin, and there is

a through cloak cupboard and a study/bedroom four which is 9ft 10in by 9ft 10in.

There is a large lounge with dining room area measuring 24ft by 20ft 8in, with the lounge area having stairs to the first floor and a feature brick fireplace with raised hearth, and a dining area with patio doors to the rear garden.

Integrated

The breakfast kitchen has an eating area which is 9ft 6in by 9ft 1in, while the kitchen area – 17ft 9in by 7ft 4in – has a range of units with stainless steel

double sink/drain, integrated electric hob with cooker hood above, integrated oven and plumbing for dishwasher.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a refitted shower room with corner cubicle, integrated wash basin and low level WC.

Outside the property is set behind the front garden with a large driveway to a double garage, while the rear garden has a full width patio area, lawns with borders and timber shed.

For further details contact Taylors of Kingswinford on 01384 401777.

Feature-packed home just right for town centre



The modern mews-style property, as viewed from the easy to maintain rear garden

A THREE-storey mews-style home, conveniently situated for all the amenities in Stourbridge town centre, is on the market priced at £145,995.

The property in High Street, Ambleside, has a versatile loft room, dining kitchen, guest cloak and en suite off the master bedroom.

On the guest floor the cloakroom has a white suite with WC and pedestal wash hand basin while the sitting room – 13ft 6in by 9ft 9in – has a feature Adam style fireplace with beige marble

hearth, matching surround and coal effect electric fire. There is also a dining kitchen, 14ft 8in by 8ft 8in, with a range of base and wall cupboards, roll edge work surfaces, inset sink and drainer with mixer tap, dishwasher, integrated larder fridge, gas hob with electric cooker below and concealed cooker hood and space and plumbing for automatic washing machine.

On the first floor bedroom one has an en suite in white with shower enclosure, pedestal wash hand basin and

WC, a second bedroom and bathroom with white suite including bath with shower over, shower screen, WC and pedestal wash hand basin.

On the second floor is a feature loft/bedroom three which could be used as a home office or hobbies room.

Outside the property has two block paved parking spaces, while the rear garden has a large slatted patio terrace and space for a garden shed, pots and tubs. Call Taylors on 01384 395555 for details.



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Tipton



£75,000

PUBLIC NOTICE 23 BELL STREET TIPTON WEST MIDLANDS DY48HZ. We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £70,000 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

Dudley



£64,950

PUBLIC NOTICE 26 Edward Street, DUDLEY, West Midlands, DY1 2AE. We would like to advise that an offer has been made for the above property in the sum of £57,000. Any person wishing to increase on this offer should notify the agents of their best offer prior to exchange of contracts. Selling agents details: Dixons Estate Agents, 23 Stone Street, Dudley, DY1 1NT. Tel: 01384 237313

Dudley



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A three bedroom terrace property briefly comprising WC, dining room, lounge, kitchen and bathroom. Dudley Branch 01384 237313

Dudley



Offers Over £110,000

Semi detached three bedroom property briefly comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen and a rear garden. Dudley 01384 237313

Hawne Lane



£250,000

Extended detached family property. The accommodation offered comprises kitchen, two bedrooms and a rear garden. Halesowen 0121 550 7474

Radbourne Drive



£240,000

This modern detached house situated at the head of a cul-de-sac with accommodation comprising lounge and four bedrooms. Halesowen 0121 550 7474

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Modern detached house on popular estate. The accommodation comprises four bedrooms and a garage. Halesowen 0121 550 7474

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Traditional semi detached property on popular estate. Accommodation comprises conservatory and four bedrooms. Halesowen 0121 550 7474

Gawne Lane



£190,000

Modern Extended Detached House with Accommodation comprising lounge, four Bedrooms and a garage. Halesowen 0121 550 7474.

Rowley Village



£125,000

A modern bed semi detached house with accommodation comprising three bedrooms and a rear garden. Halesowen 0121 550 7474

St. James Avenue



£90,000

Modern semi detached property with accommodation comprising lounge, two bedrooms, and a garage. Halesowen 0121 550 7474

Harvest Road



Offers Over £90,000

End terraced property offering accommodation of lounge, kitchen and three bedrooms. Halesowen 0121 550 7474.

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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Ford B-Max aims to beat invaders

IT'S never been harder for companies like Ford to sell cars aimed squarely at the middle of the market.

These days that's a tricky place to be, as buyers pour into dealer or cheaper cars (say, Audi or Skoda) and Far Eastern poachers like Kia and Hyundai nibble at Ford, Peugeot, Fiat and the like.

These long-term Europeans can't lower prices (they're sitting on heroic losses already) and face the fight of their lives.

With a car like the new B-Max, Ford has clearly decided to fight back by being cleverer than the competition.

It's a tricky path: the history of motoring is littered with wrecks that were too clever by half.

But it takes no more than opening the doors of the newcomer to realise Ford has got this one right. Take it for a drive, with the newest engine on board, and you'll start to worry for the opposition.

The B-Max shares some of its hidden bits with the Fiesta, but you'd never know. At a stroke it solves a problem that's bugged cars

By Ian Donaldson

used by growing families and older people – getting in an out easily. Ford's answer is to do away with the body pillar that separates front and rear doors, leaving a huge unobstructed opening that makes clipping toddlers into their car seats a doddle.

Gran and grandma will find it's never been as easy on ageing limbs to slide into the back seat, helped by the B-Max's relatively tall build.

Nagging

Sliding rear doors complete the easy-entry magic and a top five star rating in the European crash tests dispel any nagging fears that the missing side pillar might raise. The pillar's still there, but built into the moving rear doors. Very clever.

The B-Max range starts at £12,995 for the Studio model, expected to take only a tiny portion of sales. It comes with a modestly powerful petrol engine and lacks air condi-

tioning as standard (it's £700 extra). It does have a DAB radio and electric windows front and rear, though.

Next up is the Zetec series, complete with air con, alloy wheels and heated windscreen.

Prices start at £15,600 but you'll need to pay a bit more (£16,195) for the star of the show. More on that in a moment.

Zetecs will likely account for the majority of B-Max sales, with the posher Titanium trim level (from £17,595) hoovering up the substantial left overs and including niceties like cruise control, smarter air and heated front seats as part of the package.

But back to the star; it's a B-Max powered by Ford's new superflyweight three-cylinder petrol engine. It's tiny, but a turbocharger helps the modest one litre unit perform like a champ from several weight divisions above.

It's a remarkable piece of engineering, sounding wonderfully potent when pushed and delivering mid-range overtaking performance you have to experience to appreciate. The near certainty of at least 40mpg helps too. There's a more powerful (122bhp against 99bhp) of the engine in the B-Max range but only available in Titanium trim for



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The stylish Mazda MX-5 sportscar will do 0-62 in an impressive 7.9 seconds

Expect more acclaim for new Mazda MX-5

MAZDA'S iconic MX-5 has been setting hearts racing since 1989 and will continue to do so looking at the newly released upgraded model.

The new model went on sale this week with a fresh face and increased safety levels, virtually assuring that Mazda bosses will be mounting the podiums again in 2013 to collect even more awards.

There's no denying Mazda style and now there's a new, pedestrian-friendly bonnet, satellite navigation, side airbags, climate control and air conditioning as well.

Keeping ahead of tougher EU regulations, the MX-5 is the first Mazda to be equipped with an active bonnet system. If a collision with a pedestrian is detected, the bonnet instantly 'pops-up' to increase the crumple zone between bonnet and engine.

And at the same time, Mazda engi-

neers have worked on the vacuum booster to improve braking into bends.

There's an aggressive new front grille and new bumper design with a bold chin spoiler creating a deeper and wider, improving aerodynamics by reducing drag.

The Mazda MX-5 has won dozens of accolades for its superb quality and handling finesse through a rear-wheel drive chassis that delivers pure driving exhilaration.

Responsiveness

Now, the six manual transmission models feature a modified throttle to improve responsiveness and give even more acceleration.

The upgraded Mazda MX-5 benefits from enhanced equipment with climate control air-conditioning and glossy dark grey dashboard panel and steering wheel inserts on every model.

Upgraded Mazda MX-5 Sport Tech and PowerShift models also gain an auto-dimming interior mirror, while

Sport Tech models also boast an alloy pedal set. The Sport Tech Nav model features a TomTom satellite-navigation system with a fully integrated 5.8-inch touch screen monitor, 4GB SD card based map, Live Services, iPod and Bluetooth connectivity, and complete multi-media functionality.

The range also benefits from a refreshed palette of colours and new to the Mazda MX-5 range, sparkling black mica, dolphin grey mica and crystal white pearlescent along with the popular red, aluminium silver metallic, copper red and stormy blue mica. MX-5 enjoys incredible popularity in Britain and now the upgraded range offers an even more rewarding sportscar ownership experience.

The Mazda MX-5 is a thoroughly modern sportscar that you can buy with your heart and your head.

There are seven soft-top and coupe models to choose from, priced from £18,495 to £23,595 on-the-road.



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CAROLINE attractive, kind, caring, 43, seeking kind, caring male for LTR, 45-50. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396837

NATASHA single professional 39yr old brunette looking for fun and friendship with genuine guy, 30-50yrs. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395719

TRISH tall slim young/good looking GSOH, professional, solvent, OHAC, affectionate and loves life, WLTm male who also likes to be in a loving relationship, 39-50yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397579

CARING lady, 52, brown hair/eyes, seeks male, 30-60 for socialising, meals out, cinema, music, sports and having a laugh. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392883

LOVING caring young 68yr old female, 5'2 ins, slim-medium build, size 12, smoker, seeks slim, well dressed guy with GSOH for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399923

ANGELA green eyed dark haired feminine lady who enjoys walking and keeping fit, seeking lonely kind gentleman for good times and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399633

LISA attractive blue eyed brunette, sporty, well maintained 25yr old uni student looking for older male for discreet dates. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399619

GRACE Jones lookalike, black lady, 53, 5ft 11ins, OHAC, WLTm male, 45-65, 6ft plus for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397681

TRACY 26, pretty petite brunette, possibly looking for LTR but definitely looking for fun times with outgoing guy. Any age/looks. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397027

CLARE 38, single mum, curvy hour glass, loves to be tactile, OHAC, WLTm caring male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399047

PAULA 37, WLTm male companion for meals out, social drinking, weekends away, hopefully leading to a meaningful friendship with benefit! Any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398503

MICHELLE 39yr old nurse, slim, petite, blonde, blue eyes, looking to enjoy life with similar romantic caring guy. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398349

DEBS lonely 40's female with no ties, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things to be happy together with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399523

HI I'm Sharon an outgoing single mum looking to find love so thought I would give this a go, please don't make me regret it, someone call me pls. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399197

HI I'm Marilyn a blue eyed beauty. Call me if you have a happy outlook and are seeking some fun. Age/looks unimportant. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395665

SUE confident, professional, sporty/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397485

MARIA French female looking for mutually convenient companionship, very friendly, very discreet and very interested in meeting with you! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397451

LUCY beautiful big bottomed black female, very tactile, seeks mature honest white male for loving fun times. Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397389

KATHERINE 38, attractive, single, very lonely and looking for love, fun and male companionship. Pls get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397123

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

SHARON slim blonde blue eyed outgoing 30's female, looking for uncomplicated meets and adult companionship, like what you hear? Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400119

I'M Heather I love to cook, eat in/out, share a nice flirty glass of large wine or two with good company and am eager to hear from you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399715

NICKY lonely 39yr old single mum looking for adult companionship and strictly no strings fun. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399189

DEBBIE sexy size 14, fun, outgoing, discreet, looking for fun times only with male over 40yrs, call to find out more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398759

HI I'm Natalie 24, pretty, friendly, single, seeking energetic man for romantic walks, cosy nights in and fun-loving relationship. Any age/looks/race. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397489

TINA young attractive 27yr old single looking for fun times with a young male for adult fun and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397563

BEV 30yr old curvy attractive female, likes music, travel, animals, cosy nights in front of a log fire, looking for affectionate male for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397535

MICHELLE attractive 30's female, blonde, leggy and very much single, seeking quality company, hopefully more with nice romantic male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395717

BUBBLY female, 42, young at heart, honest, caring, likes outdoors, cinema, theatre, meals out, seeks likeminded male/oul mate, 40-50. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397919

VICKY honest caring female 33yrs, GSOH, loves meals in/out, travel, cinema, WLTm someone to enjoy nice things in life with and romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 389311

DENISE tall leggy good looking single mum, easygoing, enjoys nights out, animals, WLTm tall male for fun times possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391873

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CAROLINE 42yrs, slim, attractive blonde. Varied interests and solvent. WLTm honest male of any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395675

LOUISE 43, 5ft 5ins, medium build, GSOH, kind, caring, honest, genuine, loving, WLTm male, 43-55 with similar qualities for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 376165

SARAH 23, attractive, brunette, slim, looking for male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392979

KAREN witty female who loves to laugh, WLTm similar male to share interests, romance, cosy nights in and more. Pls call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393125

WIDOW 70, genuine, kind, caring, laidback, seeking male for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 387013

MANDY 36, size 10, looking for relationship with open-minded man. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 360317

ALICIA 19yr old green eyed female, very attractive, slim, long hair, independent, looking for fun with mature male, no time wasters. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 390059

JENNY blue eyed cuddly independent female, loves countryside, animals, cooking, WLTm older male to spoil and look after. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 378481

MAUREEN seeks male 32-45 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 323543

FUN loving lady, outgoing, honest, caring, likes socialising, seeks older male, 50-70. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 383325

SHAPLEY attractive, light skinned black female, 39, seeks attractive, fit, male, 30's, builder type, tanned, rugged for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 231152

I'M Julie 36yrs old, attractive, fit, blonde, solvent with OHAC seeking man to spoil and enjoy good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395051

EASYGOING down to earth female, likes cooking, exploring new things in life, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 386893

LADY young, 60, outgoing, friendly, smart, likes cinema, shopping, meals out, seeks similar female friends for days out and evenings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 387117

PAULINE attractive petite nurse, loves evenings in/out, looking for honest male to share loving friendship and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 379535

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818

CATHY is a slim attractive lady with an open-minded attitude to life. she WLTm a man of any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395657

CLARE good looking, beautiful blonde, seeks male for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 378209

JANICE 40, 5ft 5ins, medium build, brown eyes, likes music, cooking, cosy nights in/out, seeks similar male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397407

BIG bubbly black female, single mum, looking for male for nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392501

SUSIE gorgeously feminine and sensual, loves lazy summer days, misses male companionship WLTm someone with sense of adventure and lust for life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394117

61YR old lady 5ft 2ins, medium build, long dark hair, smoker, seeks smart gent who wants to get out and about for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396409

LOUISE youthful looking female looking for spontaneous male to put some love and lust back into life. Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392491

HOME alone with no one to call my own! 38yr old girl looking for fun. Can travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363277

JOY 36 petite medium build, blue eyes, loves romantic walks, meals in/out, WLTm male 30-45 for meets. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 386629

CHRIS attractive slim sophisticated redhead, seeking male 30-50's to relax with and get to know. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392401

LOUISE 35, loves meals out, with tallish, considerate mature male who is not frightened to express themselves and enjoy life. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395727

FEMALE kind, giving, thoughtful, sensitive, seeks lifetime friend to love and understand me for who I am. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 350397

LADY widow, 58, slim, brown hair, blue eyes, seeks smart, intelligent, easygoing man with GSOH who enjoys conversations, days out, short breaks, meals out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 387247

SINGLE MEN

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STEVE single dad, slim, 45, looking for girl who wants fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400257

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313

COLIN 62, divorced, many interests, GSOH, seeking slim, attractive, 50's female for companionship, maybe LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400389

STEVE 54, attractive, seeks older lady, 55-75 for mutual adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399755

CARL 40, likes DVDs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393766

COVENTRY male, 42, 6ft 1ins, caring, romantic nature, seeks female, single mum, welcome. 25-55, any nationality/Foreign for nice times in and out. Genuine replies only. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398671

BRIAN 60's, intelligent, many interests, loving, affectionate, WLTm West Mids lady for sharing occasional meetings/weekends. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400115

52YR old single parent, 5ft 11ins, slim, likes most things, walks, nights out, cinema, animals, seeks caring, honest, trustworthy female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400039

BRIAN 73, fit, N/S, own home, likes walks, cycling, meals out, nights in, holidays, travel, seeks genuine, caring female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399667

GUY early 60's, fit, N/S, OHAC, seeks slim female, 30-60 for fun, adult times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399567

LOOKING for love. Telford male, 46, shaved head, average build, likes walks, meals out, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397941

DAVID slightly disabled, likes sports, meals out, nights in, seeks female for fun, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393192

MALE fun, outgoing, easy-going, seeking female for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393346

55YR old male, likes sports, film, nights in, seeking female, 30-45 for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398049

GARY 46, loyal, genuine, GSOH, down to earth, seeking attractive lady for relationship. South Shrop/North Herefordshire. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400237

STEVE 49, fed up, seeking female for fun and friendship, possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393218

57YR old male, good looking, seeking female for fun times and nights in. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397463

GARY 39, seeks female, 30-50 for LTR and fun. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398747

FRIENDLY guy 49, tall, fit, GSOH, attractive, seeks lady for discreet fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399091

TAYLOR 50, tall, athletic, GSOH, WLTm female, attractive, curvy for friendship, maybe more, food, communication, evenings out, travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399067

GENT 54, slightly mad but not bad will make you glad you answered this ad. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398231

STEVEN 49, good looking, likes a laugh, pubs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397985

WEST Midlands single guy 60, strong, WLTm affectionate lady, your place or mine for uncommitted enjoyment. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396807

GOOD looking male, early 50's, 6ft, farmer, outgoing, fun loving, seeking attractive fun loving female, 25-35 who enjoys travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393340

IAN 60, seeks active Wolverhampton lady for discreet daytime fun and mutual pleasure. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399003

DAVID 40, genuine, down to earth, seeking someone for nights out and great times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398889

32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, bike rides, country walks and photography, seeks likeminded female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

RAYMOND 6ft, mid 70's, honest, caring, likes socialising, seeks caring lady for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398695

BRIAN 60's, ordinary man, strong needs, seeks affectionate lady for close friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396765

ROY 62, tall, fit, loyal, N/S, looking for that special lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397637

INDIAN male, UK born, seeks white English female, 35-45 to enjoy life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397509

JAMES 56, 5ft 9ins, professional, OHAC, independent, no ties, seeking loving relationship with likeminded woman. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397473

JOE 45, GSOH, attractive, medical professional, seeks female for daytime fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396671

MALE 70's, honest, caring, attractive, likes socialising, seeks smart, attractive, caring lady for meetings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397975

39YR old single dad, likes cosy nights in, seeks single, slim lady for fun relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396061

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GAY male, 34, slim, toned, seeking older guy for fun, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 395735

CD 70 plus seeking CD 70 plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393208

MALE 44, seeking male, 18-23 for fun relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391626

BI male, divorced, young, fit 50, own home/business, seeks male, 18-45 for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391849



Women TEXT FOR FUN!

*see t&c's below. No meetings implied or guaranteed. **Texts cost £1.50 per message** Help Desk: 0844 445 7707

GUYS TEXT FOR FUN. SEND WOL followed by the box number of the person you wish to chat to and send to **66888** (T&C's below)

50YR old Christian brunette, attractive, friendly, lonely, likes bowling, reading, cooking, outdoor life. **Text WOL 154567 to 66888**

BEAUTIFUL thing, attractive lady, n/s, baeutician, enjoys fashion, antique fairs, days out & country drives. Want to know more. Text me. **Text WOL 159134 to 66888**

FUN blue eyed blonde, a little dizzy at times but a big bundle of fun. **Text WOL 163788 to 66888**

HEY guys! My interests include music, reading, tattoos, cooking, hanging out with mates and many more things. Text me! **Text WOL 168355 to 66888**

I AM an adventurous, outgoing and loyal person. I enjoy going places and trying new things I am a very active person. **Text WOL 172922 to 66888**

FUN, bubbly, happy go lucky, single, mummy, work hard, play hard, friends, family, horse, gym, wine, movies, random nights **Text WOL 218842 to 66888**

I LOVE going out and having a laugh. Im new to all this, so be patient lol. **Text WOL 182056 to 66888**

Men TEXT FOR FUN!

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LADIES TEXT FOR FUN. SEND WOL followed by the box number of the person you wish to chat to and send to **66888** (T&C's below)

DIVORCED Male 59, VGSOH, n/s easy-going, enjoy music, poker, cooking, watch football, having a pint in a local pub. **Text WOL 488556 to 66888**

I LOVE the arts, countryside and eating out. Honest, sensuous, with lots to share and give. **Text WOL 493123 to 66888**

Join the fun and run to be healthy



DETERMINED fun runners and beginners are starting to take up this year's Action Heart Five training schedule.

The hard work culminates in a five-mile run on Sunday, February 24 which starts and finishes at Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley. It gets under way at 9.30am.

Those taking part will not only be helping themselves by getting fitter but helping others by showing their care. Last week we outlined the first week's training programme. If you missed the first week's schedule, or did not manage to get started, then don't worry. It is not too late to begin and would be an excellent New Year's resolution to get fit in 2013, beginning with the Action Heart Five training programme.

Remember, get approval from your doctor if you have not been keeping fit previously; warm up before each session and, just as important, warm down afterwards.

If you are planning to follow the training and would like to let us know how you are coping, call Action Heart on 01384 292233 or email running@action-heart.com

So do it now – start off the new year in a healthy way. Download an entry form from www.actionheartrunning.com and send it to the Action Heart office. You will receive your race pack with race number and full details of the route.

Training: Week Two
Monday: Rest.
Tuesday: 10-minute jog
Wednesday: Six-minute jog.
Thursday: Rest
Friday: Eight-minute jog
Saturday: Rest.
Sunday: One-mile jog/walk.
 Look out for week three next Thursday.

Heathens add seventh man

MANCHESTER racer Gareth Isherwood is the Dudley Heathens' final team member for a speedway National League tilt.

Isherwood, 24, arrives on a 5.03 average and joins Ashley Morris, Lewis Blackbird, Dan Greenwood, Paul Starke, Max Clegg and Nathan Greaves.



Nicola Finlay weaves her way through against Sandwell

Yeltz ladies show no mercy

Halesowen Town Ladies 7 Sandwell Ladies 0
 HALESOWEN drew at Sandwell earlier in the season when an early injury left them with no substitutes.

But they took the Birmingham County Women's Division Two points emphatically in this return game.

A hat-trick from Rachel Letford and two goals apiece for Lyndsey Glover and Shannie Jennings maintained their unbeaten run and left them four points behind leaders Rushall with two games in hand.

After a sloppy start following the festive break, Halesowen began to take control and scored five times before the

Women's football

interval. They got under way when Glover netted a free-kick from the edge of the box.

Hard-working midfielders Danielle Reade and Nicola Finlay ensured plenty of good possession for Glover and Jennings on the wings as Halesowen tried to set up Letford and Chloe Harris.

Letford bagged the second, belting back a clearance from the Sandwell goalkeeper as the ball came to her 35 yards out.

Reade's through ball then put Letford away to score the third Yeltz goal from a tight angle.

There was no let-up for Sandwell as Glover, Halesowen's player of the match, made it 4-0 with an accurate strike before Letford completed her treble just before half-time. Sian Whittall's pass put her clear for an emphatic finish.

Sandwell competed well in the second half but any hopes they had of a revival were killed off by Jennings' two goals in the space of 10 minutes, converting passes from Whittall and Finlay.

Deeming solo seals the points for Hawks

Halas Hawks U9 North 3 Kingsley U9 2

HALAS made a bright start against Kingsley, taking the lead through Alex Tierney.

A Kingsley equaliser was followed by a fine solo effort by Callum Deeming to restore the Halas lead.

Jacob Phillips made it 3-1 and a late Kingsley goal set up a tense last few minutes.

Halas Hawks U9 East 0 Hinkford U9 3

Halas lost their first match of the new year. They gave a sluggish first-half display to trail 2-0 at the interval, but in the second half Halas were more of a threat with Luke Nock twice going close.

Withymoor U10 West 0

The under-10 West side came away from Withymoor with victory thanks to a brace of goals from Harvey Brookes. But Halas had to thank their man-of-the-match, keeper Benjamin Jones, for a superb save in the first half.

Stourbridge Glassboys U11 3

Halas Hawks U11 East 4

Halas took their third win in four games with a good display. They were one down at half-time, but came out strongly in the second half to score three quick goals through Harvey Jacobs, Oliver Miller and Charlie Greening.

The Glassboys pulled one back but Joshua Yorke restored the two-goal margin. Stourbridge made it 4-3 late on, but Halas held out in a nervy last few minutes.

Woodcross U14 5

Halas Hawks U14 3

An under-par performance saw the under-14s start the year with a defeat. Poor defending let them down and only when Halas trailed 5-1 did they wake up and start to play. Goals came from Cain Bissett (2) and Harry Clements.

Halas Hawks U15 3

Trysull Tigers U15 1

A lively first half ended in stalemate, despite several close attempts from Halas.

The second period saw Adam Higginson, Dominic Hipkins and Joshua Mason convert their chances to put Halas in the driving seat. Trysull got a late consolation.

Wednesbury U16 1

Halas Hawks U16 3

The under-16s reached the fourth round of the Birmingham County Cup with goals from Mitchell Tomlinson, Jon Rizzo and skipper Reis Potter.

Cup progress will be at a cost for Albion

QPR 1 Albion 1

ALBION would love to make progress in the FA Cup – but it would come at a cost.

The Baggies took a deserved place in the fourth-round draw from a low-key afternoon in London, writes *Steve Madeley*.

They will be favourites to complete their third-round task and progress to a home tie against Sheffield Wednesday or MK Dons.

But aside from the crucial fact his side avoided an early exit from one of his favourite competitions, the return to Loftus Road could hardly have been more frustrating for boss Steve Clarke.

The Hawthorns head coach was back at the home of the Rs just 11 days after a much more pleasing day had seen his side claim a Boxing Day victory in the Premier League.

And just about anything that could have gone wrong did, as Albion kept themselves in the Cup – but at a price.

Gera

The Scot will have left Loftus Road more than content with the performance of his injury-hit side but wondering just how he had upset the footballing gods quite so severely.

In the process of seeing his side keep their supporters' Wembley dream alive, Clarke saw another player added to a lengthening injury list. Serious concerns about Zoltan Gera's knee dominated the Baggies' thoughts as they arrived back in the West Midlands – and it was later confirmed that the Hungarian is out for the rest of the season.

Clarke saw what remained of his squad toil throughout a scrappy afternoon as a tough Christmas and new year schedule ended with a draining 90 minutes of Cup action.

He saw a former charge from his West Ham days bag his first goal in more than five years to deny the Baggies' automatic passage into round four. Kieron Dyer's 91st-



James Morrison and QPR's keeper Julio Cesar shake on it after a collision

minute strike gave Rangers a second chance they scarcely deserved and, in many respects, probably didn't want.

It handed the Baggies a potentially tiring replay just days before one of the games their supporters relish the most – the Hawthorns meeting with Villa.

Even Baggies goalscorer Shane Long needed the aid of two fortunate deflections to give his side a late lead that they more than deserved.

It was truly a day when nothing ran smoothly for Clarke and his men. Still, if Albion can claim victory in the Hawthorns replay and keep themselves in with a shout of silverware, the afternoon of setbacks in the capital might feel worthwhile.

It was certainly a display to be pleased with for Clarke and his players, who responded to back-to-back Premier League defeats by having the better of proceedings against a Rangers side boosted by their own

momentous victory against rivals Chelsea.

The game was far from a classic. But what chances there were fell Albion's way as goalkeeper Boaz Myhill – whose inclusion ahead of Ben Foster was the only instance of 'resting' in Clarke's team selection – was never called into significant action by a Rangers side who were blunted for 90 minutes by solid defending. The game rarely came to life as a spectacle with long-range efforts the order of the day for long spells.

Gabriel Tamas and George Thorne failed to test Julio Cesar from distance for Albion while Rangers talisman Adel Taarabt, who showed flashes of his match-winning magic, weaved his way through midfield but blasted a shot well wide. Cesar made two smart saves, first to keep out Long's shot from a tricky angle and then to stop Romelu Lukaku's follow-up.

The Brazilian did even better to keep out a powerful header from Lukaku as the first



Shane Long applauds the visiting supporters

half ticked by. The Baggies' best first-half chance went begging as Marc-Antoine Fortune, Long and Lukaku linked up and James Morrison poked a shot wide as he lost balance.

Lukaku's shot from a narrow angle flew just wide early in the second half before a DJ Campbell header looped over the bar for Rangers. Stephane Mbia blasted over the Albion goal and Billy Jones missed the target at the other end with the umpteenth long-range effort.

The breakthrough arrived when Rangers substitute Nedum Onuoha suffered for two unlucky ricochets, the first of which allowed George Thorne to tee up Long with the second diverting the Irishman's shot past Cesar.

But Dyer was to have the last word as he pounced on a raking crossfield pass and found the bottom corner to give the Baggies their final kick in the teeth.

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Dubidat at double in Town nap hand

Tipton Town 5 Colehill 0
TWO goals just before half-time put Tipton Town on their way to a big Midland Alliance victory.

After Colehill's Stuart McNaught mistimed his run in on the home goal, Tipton surged into action in the 22nd minute, Danny Dubidat zipping over a cross for Nigel Penney to skim the visitors' bar.

Colehill replied in the 31st minute, full-back Lewis Bishop forcing home keeper Jake Woodhouse to concede a corner.

As half-time approached, Tipton finally took a well-deserved lead through Dubidat. Nigel Penney gleefully rammed in Tipton's second right on half-time.

Tipton pressed home their advantage and the wily Matt Martin guided his curling free-kick home in the 49th.

The visitors were in disarray and the fourth goal came from Wardle and Tipton went nap in the 74th minute, Dubidat driving home his second.

A minute's silence was observed before the game in memory of Tipton Town president Bill Powell, who died on December 22. His funeral was being held on Tuesday at Morton Church, near Knockin, Shropshire.

Robins on song to halt Cradley bid

Dudley Town 4 Cradley Town 1
CRADLEY threatened before falling away at Dudley in the West Midlands Premier.

The hosts were ahead within five minutes. A corner was not cleared properly, allowing Dreniz Bala to drill home a shot that Cradley keeper Matt Jones was unable to keep out at his near post.

The Robins doubled their advantage on 37 minutes. A fine cross from Danny Ludlow was caught on the volley by Grant Joshua.

The visitors started the second half brightly and cut the deficit with a looping header from Will Tibbetts on 55 minutes. Cradley were unlucky not to snatch an equaliser with Tibbetts and Chris Bladen going close.

But on 75 minutes substitute Tom Gadd delivered a low cross from which Joshua scored. Eight minutes later, Gadd scored himself.

Evo-Stik North League Division One South

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Coolville	22	18	2	2	71	21	56
Stamford	23	15	3	5	65	36	48
Sutton Coldfield	27	14	5	8	52	45	47
King's Lynn	21	12	5	4	42	31	41
Belper	23	10	8	5	48	27	38
Gresley	24	12	2	10	48	38	38
Brigg	24	9	7	8	42	42	34
Rainworth	26	10	4	12	48	53	34
Halesowen	24	10	4	10	43	34	34
Carlton	23	9	9	5	37	35	32
Northwich	23	9	10	4	48	40	31
Sheffield	21	6	6	7	47	45	30
Leek	20	7	8	5	40	34	29
Market D	23	7	8	8	36	40	29
Loughboro'	25	7	11	5	52	44	28
Chasetown	22	6	9	7	41	40	27
Lincoln	23	7	6	10	41	52	27
Newcastle	23	6	9	8	28	33	26
Kidsgrove	25	6	2	15	50	60	26
Mickleover	25	5	12	32	34	53	23
Romulus	23	4	6	13	21	50	18
Hucknall	24	4	3	17	30	84	15

Yeltz give a five-star performance

Halesowen Town 5 Romulus 0

HALESOWEN strolled to their biggest win of the season with a hat-trick from Ben Haseley and a brace from strike partner Naveed Arshad.

Romulus failed to register a decent chance on target all afternoon as Halesowen gradually asserted authority following a low-key start to this Evo-Stik North First Division South match.

The Yeltz took the lead in the 26th minute when Gavin Winsper lofted the ball into the penalty area and Arshad looped a header beyond the

Halesowen Town

reach of goalkeeper Liam Roberts.

Romulus won their corner of the game in the 42nd minute but the attack came to nothing as Aaron Griffiths quickly broke away and set up Mitchell Botfield to fire a good chance straight at Roberts.

Haseley then headed Halesowen into a comfortable 2-0 lead by meeting Botfield's left-wing corner seconds before half-time.

There was no respite for Romulus just after the interval as Jean-

Michel Gueyes shot inches over the bar before the hosts turned the screw with three further second half goals.

Haseley made it 3-0 for the Yeltz in the 57th minute by rifling firmly into the roof of the net from just inside the area after Arshad shielded the ball.

Halesowen were awarded a 77th minute penalty after Haseley was impeded but his resulting spot-kick was saved by Roberts down the middle of goal. However, leading striker Haseley reacted quickly to

hammer home the rebound and complete his hat-trick with his 27th goal of the season.

Arshad compounded the Romulus misery in the final minute by collecting a long ball and firing home Halesowen's fifth goal down the centre.

Halesowen Town: Coleman, Bowen, Cairns, Botfield (Schoeppe 74), Winsper, Khan (Hull 83), Griffiths, Barnfield, Arshad, Haseley (Corbett 80), Gueyes. **Subs not used:** Kelly, P Evans.

Romulus: Roberts, M Jackson, O'Callaghan, Batchelor, Francis, Deakin, Ravenhill, Walker (Wynter 41), Williams, Brown (Amory 65), A Jackson (Beckley 72). **Subs not used:** Munday, Les.

Referee: Scott Postin. Attendance: 211

Title bid 'survival of fittest'

DARREN McDERMOTT believes the British title tussle between his old sparring partners Jason Welborn and Frankie Gavin will be a survival of the fittest.

Dudley's McDermott has trained with both Rowley Regis' Welborn, the challenger, and Gavin, the champion from Birmingham, from the gym at his home in Woodseton.

The two welterweights will battle for the belt at Walsall Town Hall next Friday night and 'Macca' knows what each must do.

'The Black Country Bodysnatcher' won Midlands and English middleweight titles and competed for the British and Commonwealth crowns.

The 34-year-old knows the challenger inside out as Welborn was his chief sparring partner for fights against Wayne Elecock, Steven Bendall and Darren Barker. Now McDermott will be ringside.

McDermott said: "Jason has got to be fit, he needs to have trained like he's never trained before and he's got to stay on him for 12 rounds."

The show is a sell out but there is a waiting list for tickets. Call 0845 111 2900.

Draw ends hope for win double

Halas Hawks Ladies 1 Solihull Ladies 1

HALAS hoped to complete a double over Solihull in this top of the table Birmingham County Women's League clash.

But it was the visitors who went in at half-time leading 1-0 lead. The second period saw Halas come more into the game and they deserved their Tash Berry equaliser.

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FIGHTER PUTS BACK INTO QUALIFYING BID

A BLACK belt karate expert, who has competed at international level for more than 25 years, was clocked as he rolled over in bed.

Karl Horschburgh is currently training hard to win a place at this year's world championships in Romania, but popped his back as he turned over to switch off his alarm clock.

Horschburgh, a 39-year-old fifth dan, from Hayley Green, Halesowen, is now full of praise for the surgeon who saved his fighting career without even having to operate.

He said: "It was unbelievable. One day I was as fit as a fiddle and the next I couldn't move my shoulders four inches to the left or right."

"I had rolled over in bed to turn off the alarm and something just went pop. I knew straight away something had gone very badly wrong."

It happened just days before Horschburgh was due to take part in the selection trials for the European Team Championships – something he was expected to qualify for with ease.

Gutted
"I was absolutely gutted. I knew I could have done well in the championships and there I was, in absolute agony and fearing that my karate career could be over," he said.

"I went down the path of physio and painkillers and nothing seemed to be working until someone gave me the name of a back specialist they said would be able to help."

It was then that Horschburgh met with consultant spinal surgeon Mushtaq Ishaque at BMI Priory Hospital in Birmingham. He said three discs had evidence of degenerative disc disease.

"I thought he was bound to suggest an operation," Horschburgh said. "But he assured me he could sort out

Karate

my back with nothing more than a series of injections. It was amazing, within days I was doing light training and in next to no time I was ready to compete again."

Just weeks later, he picked up four silver medals in the English Championships before going on to achieve a gold and two bronze medals in the Irish Championships.

Mr Ishaque said: "Degenerative disc disease is extremely common. In this case Karl had had symptoms for four months before he underwent an injection."

"When the discs herniate they are often associated with an area of inflammation. This inflammation can cause the nerve to become red hot, swollen and tender."

"The role of the injection is to reduce the inflammation in and around the nerve root."

Horschburgh, who runs Smetwick Shukokai Club in Bearwood, is now 'putting his back into' qualifying for the world championships where he will compete in the veterans aged 35 to 40 years category.

"I thought my competition days were a thing of the past but Mr Ishaque really did give my karate career a new lease of life," he said.



The alarm bells ring – karate ace Karl Horschburgh and the offending bedside clock

Too high a Hill for Dale side

Dunkirk 3 Tividale 1

TIVIDALE went down to an in-form side after being reduced to 10 men in this Midland Alliance clash.

Dale were looking to bounce back after a midweek defeat at bottom club Ellesmere Rangers. But their chances dimmed after Adam Hill was shown a red card, which the referee later explained had been for a "petulant flick with his foot" that caught an opponent.

The early part of the match was almost a non-event but things livened up after midfielder Hill's dismissal. On 43 minutes the home side went in front.

Replacement keeper Chris Walwyn saved an initial shot but the rebound fell for Kieran Wells and he hammered the ball in.

A minute later Tividale equalised. Lone striker Matt Jukes latched onto a through ball to score.

The second half saw the home side up the pace and on 57 minutes a Richard Whyman effort was deflected in by Luke Paskin.

Tividale had a couple of chances to get back on level terms, but were always on the back foot and at the end Rhys Jeffrey got Dunkirk's third.

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